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DRIVING THE ECONOMY— INTO A DITCH

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- LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY on the stimulus that didn't

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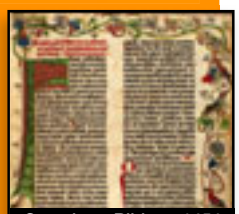
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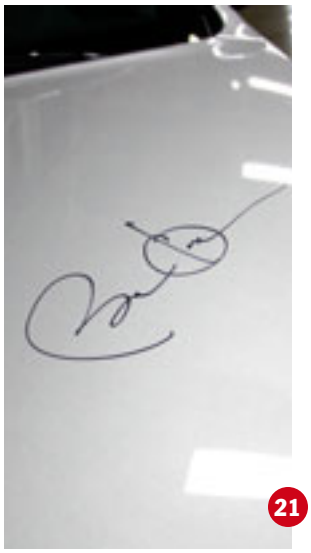

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The Unreal D.C.

As some readers of THE SCRAPBOOK may be aware, *The Real Housewives of Washington, D.C.*, debuted last week on the Bravo channel. And as might be expected, the real housewives of Washington, D.C.—like their sisters in Atlanta, Orange County, and New Jersey—have been loudly complaining that this highly successful program is transparently bogus and that the "housewives" in question are interchangeable with the "housewives" of, say, Orange County.

THE SCRAPBOOK cannot disagree. The Washington cast is an assorted lot (the founder of a modeling agency, Arthur Godfrey's granddaughter, a philanthropic MBA, a British transplant of dubious immigrant status, Michaele Salahi the White House gatecrasher), heavy on blondes and discreet cosmetic surgery, whose lives and vocations seem distinctly uncharacteristic of Washington. There's not a federal employee in the bunch, no lawyer, no congressman's wife, no lobbyist or policy wonk, no discernible Republican or Democrat. You get the impression that if you mentioned the Carnegie Endowment to these "housewives" they would think it concerns breast enhancement.

But as foolish as *The Real Housewives* may be, THE SCRAPBOOK predicts that it is destined to become yet another guilty pleasure in the nation's capital. Washington, the home of Wilbur Mills, Monica Lewinsky, and Barney Frank, enjoys a good show. Nor, in fairness, is *The Real Housewives* all that different from Hollywood's perception of Washington over the decades: characteristic of its times and seldom having anything to do with reality.

In the 1930s, for example, there was *The President Vanishes* (1934) about a successful fascist plot to kidnap the commander in chief by a would-be *Führer* named Lincoln Lee ("I talk big. I *am* big!"). *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) is much admired for its paean to democracy and Jimmy Stewart's performance, but the idea of one incorruptible senator ending decades of cynical misrule on Capitol Hill is as laughable now as it was 70 years ago.

Michaele Salahi

The Cold War and the advent of atomic weaponry brought us the comic utopian masterpiece *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), with its flying saucer on the Mall and unforgettable slogan ("Klaatu barada nikto"), as well as *Advise and Consent* (1962) about Red-baiting and the suicide of a closeted gay senator. Crazed right-wing generals were on the minds of the Hollywood artistes who created *Seven Days in May* (1964), where General Burt Lancaster plots to overthrow disarmament-minded president Fredric March, and *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), which managed to combine several left-wing shibboleths—Air Force generals, nuclear theorists, anticommunism, the Strategic Air Command, German scientists—into one rollicking spectacle.

In recent years Hollywood has tried—with mixed success—to glamorize Washington journalism (*All the President's Men*, 1976), demonize the CIA (*Three Days of the Condor*, 1975), make environmentalism sexy (*The American President*, 1995), and politicians lovable (*Dave*, 1993). Television programs set in Washington tend to be sitcoms (*The Farmer's Daughter*, *227*, *Hearts Afire*, *Women of the House*), office dramas (*West Wing*), or romantic fluff (*Scarecrow and Mrs. King*) which could take place just about anywhere. The truth is that Washington is a company town, a political capital, and the currency of politics is ideas and jibber-jabber—not exactly the ingredients of gripping drama or side-splitting comedy.

So THE SCRAPBOOK welcomes the "Real Housewives" to Washington, and looks forward to Michaele Salahi crashing the next meeting of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. ♦

Joe Klein Then and Now

Time magazine blogger Joe Klein, on August 2, 2010, commenting on Obama's speech on the war in Iraq:

> It is the way of the world that Barack Obama's announcement today of the end of the combat phase in Iraq, and the beginning of a 16-month period of advice and support for the Iraqi security forces before U.S. troops leave in 2011, will not be remembered as vividly as George Bush's juvenile march across the deck of an aircraft carrier, costumed as a combat aviator in a golden sunset, to announce—six years and tens of thousands of lives prematurely—the "end of combat operations."

Time magazine's Joe Klein, in an appearance on *Face the Nation* on May 4, 2003, commenting on Bush's appearance two days earlier on the USS *Lincoln*:

> Well, that was probably the coolest presidential image since Bill Pullman played the jet fighter pilot in the movie *Independence Day*. That was the first thing that came to mind for me. And it just shows you how high a mountain these Democrats are going to have to climb. You compare that image, which

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everybody across the world saw, with this debate last night where you have nine people on a stage and it doesn't air until 11:30 at night, up against *Saturday Night Live*, and you see what a major, major struggle the Democrats are going to have to try and beat a popular incumbent president.

As Peter Wehner noted at the *Commentary* magazine blog Contentions, "Such bipolar shifts of opinion in a high-ranking public official would be alarming and dangerous; in a columnist and blogger, they are comical and discrediting." ♦

Your Tax Dollars at Work in Obama's HHS

Is your child bedwetting? Pre-teen becoming physically aggressive? Teenager doing heroin? It's probably not his small bladder, or your parenting, or the bad elements at his prep school. It's the oil spill.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, the same people tasked with taking over and running the new, improved U.S. health care system, children may be "frightened, confused and insecure" if they "experienced personal consequences of the oil spill through their family or community." Okay, maybe. But according to the report from the Center for Mental Health Services, teenagers and young adults might exhibit troubled behavior even if they just "watched it on television, or overheard it being discussed by adults."

Different age groups will have different reactions. "Very young children may return to an earlier behavioral stage to cope with the stress and loss associated with the oil spill disaster. Preschoolers may resume thumbsucking or bedwetting, or they may suddenly become afraid of strangers, animals, darkness, or 'monsters.'" Older kids, ages 12-18, might have "vague physical complaints." They "may abandon chores, school work, or other responsibilities that they previously handled. Although some may compete vigorously for attention from parents and teachers, they may also withdraw, resist authority, become disruptive or aggressive at home or in the classroom." Some parents call this adolescence.

What to do? In addition to telling children that "you, too, may have reactions associated with the oil spill disaster," parents and teachers should encourage kids to heal through "conversation, writing or artwork."

If all of that sounds like something from a bad Ph.D. dissertation, the final "how to help section" reads like something that might have been dictated by the children and teenagers themselves.

Teachers and parents should "temporarily reduce your expectations about performance in school or at home, perhaps by substituting less demanding responsibilities for normal assignments or chores."

What's that, Johnny? You overheard the oil spill being discussed by adults? That's awful. Shoot for all C's this semester and don't worry about cleaning your room. No word from HHS on how to deal with the severe trauma caused by overhearing too much of MSNBC's *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'A couple weeks ago, President Obama and his wife held 'A Broadway Celebration: In Performance at the White House,' a concert in the East Room by some of Broadway's biggest names, singing some of Broadway's most famous hits. Because my wife is on the board of the public TV station that organized the evening, . . . " (*New York Times*, Thomas L. Friedman, August 3). ♦

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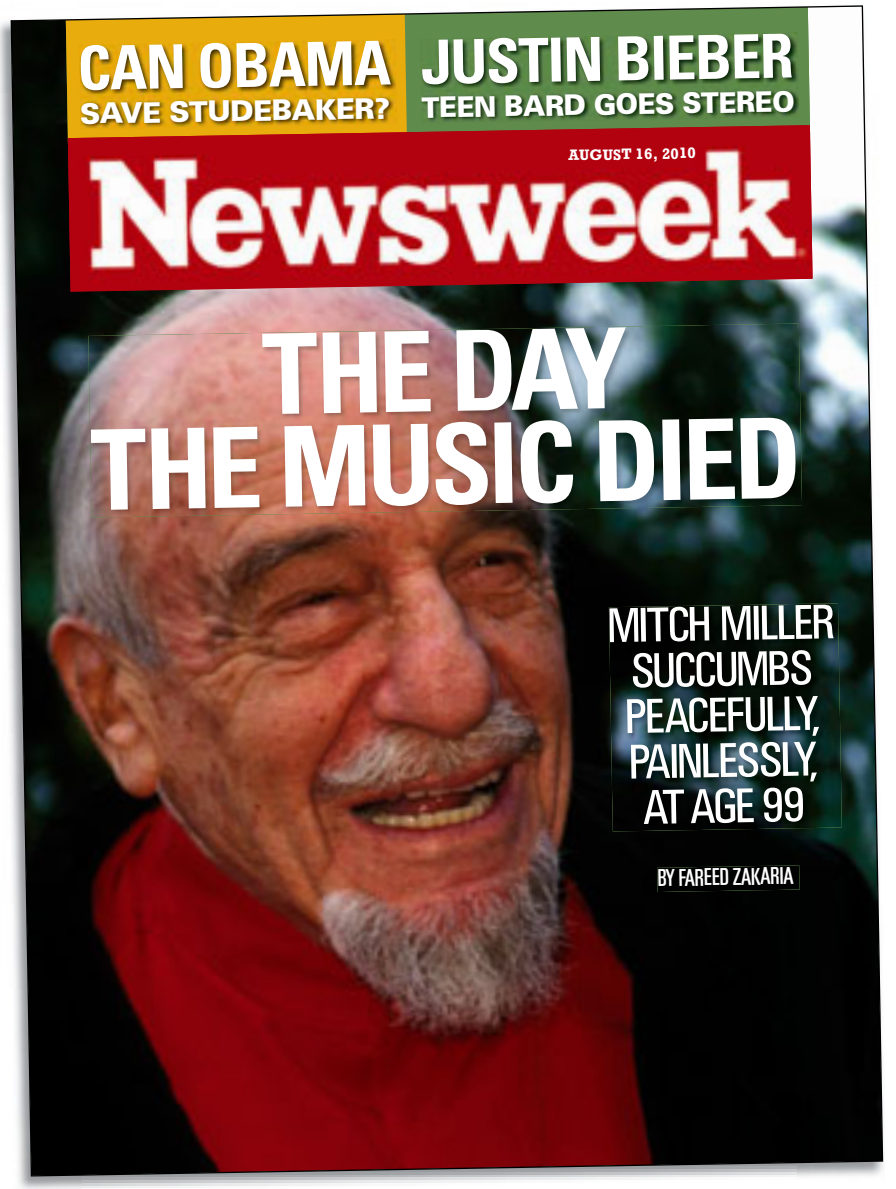
PARODY EXTRA!

"Sidney Harman, a 91-year-old audio pioneer, will be the new owner of *Newsweek*, the Washington Post Company announced on Monday after a two-and-a-half month search."

—*New York Times*, August 3, 2010



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Adios, Gray Lady

The *New York Times* used to be called the Gray Lady of American newspapers. The sobriquet implied a certain stateliness, a sense of responsibility, the possession of high virtue. But the Gray Lady is far from the grande dame she once was. For years now she has been going heavy on the rouge, lipstick, and eyeliner, using a push-up bra, and gadding about in stiletto heels. She's become a bit—perhaps more than a bit—of a slut, whoring after youth through pretending to be with-it. I've had it with the old broad; after nearly 50 years together, I've determined to cut her loose.

I have decided, that is, to cancel my subscription to the *New York Times*. For so many decades the paper has been part of my morning mental hygiene. Yet in recent years I've been reading less and less of each day's paper. Most days now I do no more than scan the headlines on the front page, check the sports pages for the pitchers in that day's White Sox and Cubs games, then flip over to the Irish sports pages, as the obits have been called, to see if anyone I know has pegged out.

History may not repeat itself, but the news does, relentlessly. Since the *New York Times* began to run more and more feature stories, often on its front page, lots of what appears in its pages hasn't been news, not even close. "Chief Justice Warren Sees No Trend in Burger Court," with its stunning irrelevance, is an old *Times* headline atop the kind of story I have in mind and see more and more of.

I long ago ceased reading the newspaper's letters section in the hope of finding a man or woman after my own heart. With the exception of David Brooks, who allows that his general position is slightly to the right of center but who is not otherwise locked into a Pavlovian political response, I find no need to read any of the *Times*'s regular columnists. Every so often I check to remind myself that Maureen Dowd isn't amusing, though she is an improvement, I suppose, over the termagantial Anna Quindlen, whom I used to read with the trepidation of a drunken husband mounting the stairs knowing his wife awaits with a rolling pin. I'd sooner read the fine print in my insurance policies than the paper's perfectly predictable editorials. Laughter, an elegant phrase, a surprising sentiment—the *New York Times* op-ed and editorial pages are the last place to look for any of these things.

DAVID CLARK

I sometimes glimpse the Arts section to see which wrong people are being praised or have been awarded large cash prizes or recognized for years of mediocre achievement by election to the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Arts, of course, are no longer quite The Arts, at least in the *New York Times*, which features hard rock and rap music and video games and graphic novels under the rubric The Arts. Only the photographs of dancers lend an aesthetic dimension to the shabby section.

I lift the Sunday *New York Times* from the hallway outside our apartment with a heart twice the weight of the hefty paper itself. From it I extract the *Book Review*, the magazine, "Sunday Styles," the "Week in Review." For decades now the *New York Times Book Review* has been devoted to reinforcing received (and mostly wrong) literary opinions and doing so in impressively undistinguished prose. The *New York Times Magazine* has always been dull, but earlier it erred on the side of seriousness. Now it is dull on the side of ersatz hipness. The other Sunday I put myself through a long article on the dangers of leaving a record of one's minor misdeeds on the Internet. The article's last sentence instructed that "we need to learn new forms of empathy, new ways of defining ourselves without reference to what others say about us and new ways of forgiving one another for the digital trails that will follow us forever." Yes, I thought, and wet birds never fly at night.

I could go on about the artificial rage of Frank Rich—the liberals' Glenn Beck—or the forced gaiety of "Sunday Styles," but the main feeling I have as I rise from having wasted an hour or so with the Sunday *New York Times* is of what wretched shape the country is in if it is engaged in such boringly trivial pursuits, elevating to eminence such dim cultural and political figures, writing so muddledly about ostensibly significant subjects.

Perhaps one picks up all newspapers in anticipation and puts them down in disappointment. But the *New York Times*, at no extra charge, also leaves one feeling one lives in immitigably dreary times, and it does so daily. I don't need it.

Cancel my subscription, please.

Joseph Epstein

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While it's true that gold has been the storehouse of wealth for many centuries, I can't help thinking about America's relationship with gold over her history. Did you know that the United States had no gold of its own when it was founded? In fact, no truly large gold strike was made until 1849 – the beginning of the great California Gold Rush. Then folks couldn't wait to get their hands on those big gold double eagles. They had gold fever just like lots of other folks do now.

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the weekly Standard

Shut Up, He Explained

Last Tuesday, standing in front of the Statue of Liberty, New York mayor Michael Bloomberg spoke on the subject of the proposed mosque at Ground Zero. His remarks will be read with curiosity by future generations of Americans, who will look back in astonishment at the self-deluding pieties and self-destructive dogmas that are held onto, at once smugly and desperately, by today's liberal elites. Our liberation from those dogmas, and from those elites, is underway across the nation. But it's worth taking a look at Bloomberg's speech, if only to remind us of what we need to ascend from so our descendants can look back with curiosity at the ethos to which we did not succumb.

As is the way of contemporary liberals, Bloomberg spoke at a very high level of abstraction. He appealed to the principle of religious toleration, while never mentioning the actual imam who is responsible for and would control the planned Ground Zero mosque. To name Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf might invite a consideration of his background, funding, and intentions. Do Rauf and his backers believe in the principles underlying the "inspiring symbol of liberty" that greets immigrants to the United States and before which Bloomberg stood? Bloomberg didn't say. It apparently doesn't matter. Toleration means asking nothing, criticizing nothing, saying nothing, about whom or what one is tolerating. This is the Sergeant Schultz standard of toleration: I know nothing.

Knowing nothing, or wishing to know nothing, about the mosque, Bloomberg took it upon himself to lecture his fellow New Yorkers on their obligation to be true to "the best part of ourselves." That part is apparently the part of us that allows at once for intellectual obfuscation and moral preening. Bloomberg never acknowledged that sane and tolerant people might object to a 15-story Islamic community center and mosque right next to Ground Zero. He could not be bothered to take seriously the reservations and objections of a clear majority of his constituents. "In fact, to cave to popular sentiment would be to hand a victory to the terrorists—and we should not stand for that." So public sentiment be damned. There's nothing to be learned from the ignorant and bigoted residents of New York.

Instead, Bloomberg lectured: "On September 11, 2001, thousands of first responders heroically rushed to the scene and saved tens of thousands of lives. More than 400 of those first responders did not make it out alive. In rushing into those burning buildings, not one of them asked 'What God do you pray to?' 'What beliefs do you hold?'" True, certainly true. But Bloomberg did not permit himself to ask what vision of god, what set of beliefs, inspired those who set those buildings aflame. Bloomberg said that it was our "spirit of openness and acceptance that was attacked on 9/11." But attacked by whom? Bloomberg wouldn't say.

In fact, he denied the propriety of asking such a question. It would have been one thing—a more defensible thing—if Bloomberg had argued that there was little that could be done legally to stop the mosque and that New Yorkers should therefore make the best of a bad situation. But that was not his message. Instead, Bloomberg came to the Statue of Liberty not simply to accept the mosque, but to praise it: "Of course, it is fair to ask the organizers of the mosque to show some special sensitivity to the situation—and in fact, their plan envisions reaching beyond their walls and building an interfaith community. By doing so, it is my hope that the mosque will help to bring our City even closer together. . . . I expect the community center and mosque will add to the life and vitality of the neighborhood and the entire City."

But have the real, existing organizers of the mosque shown much sensitivity to other New Yorkers? The answer is no—but if you're a contemporary liberal, you don't get into the actual, existing facts in order to make a judgment. You govern on the basis of what the organizers' "plan" nominally "envisions," you appeal to a hope and expectation that even Bloomberg can't really believe in. But it allows him to avoid coming to grips with what is really happening and what lies behind the popular sentiment of disgust, even revulsion.

The conclusion of Bloomberg's speech was odd: "Political controversies come and go, but our values and our traditions endure—and there is no neighborhood in this City that is off limits to God's love and mercy, as the religious leaders here with us can attest." Do the rest of us need Bloomberg's hand-picked religious leaders to tell us that there are no limits to God's love and mercy? We do doubt that encouraging this mosque to be built is an appropriate expression of respect for God's love and mercy for those who were killed almost nine years ago. And we would note that no expression of New Yorkers' love and gratitude for the victims of September 11 has yet been built at the site of Ground Zero during Mayor Bloomberg's tenure.

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It is likely, we believe, that civic pressure will cause the mosque to be moved elsewhere—Bloomberg's lecture notwithstanding. But if Bloomberg were to have his way, it's worth noting that he would presumably attend a dedication of Feisal Abdul Rauf's mosque at Ground Zero before he would attend a dedication of a proper memorial to those who died there.

Contemporary liberalism means building a mosque rather than a memorial at Ground Zero—and telling your fellow citizens to shut up about it.

—*William Kristol*

Obama's Iran Fantasy

Iran is at war with the United States in Afghanistan. Documents released as part of the Wikileaks dump show that U.S. commanders receive regular reports of collusion between the Iranians, al Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) Islamist group. The Iranians arm, train, shelter, and fund the jihadists.

A February 7, 2005, threat report describes how the "Iranian Intelligence agencies brought 10 million Afghanis (approximately $212,800)" into Afghanistan to fund jihadists. A February 18, 2005, report says that a group of Taliban leaders living in Iran are orchestrating attacks against Coalition forces: "The Iranian government has offered each member of the group 100,000 Rupees ($1,740) for any [Afghan] soldier killed and 200,000 Rupees ($3,481) for any [government] official." A June 3, 2006, threat report says that two Iranian agents "are helping HIG and [Taliban] members in carrying out terrorist attacks against the AFG governmental authorities and the [coalition force] members, especially against the American forces."

A document dated December 30, 2007, details an investigation into a suicide bomb cell that was "tasked by Taliban/al-Qaeda leaders . . . to carry out suicide attacks on high level officials and Coalition forces in the area." Two American investigators inspected the would-be suicide bombers' explosive vests and found "a 92% probability of a match against a suspected sample of Iranian C4."

A September 2008 threat report says that a group of Arabs tied to one of Osama bin Laden's deputies was planning "to carry out suicide attacks against U.S. and Italian troops" or any foreign personnel in the area. The suicide bomber cell received assistance from "four Iranians" who work for Iran's intelligence service and "are supporting [the cell] . . . through intelligence" and "coordinating the activities."

Such support continues. Last week, on August 2, U.S. and Afghan security forces conducted a nighttime raid of a compound in the Arghandab district of Kandahar, seeking "a major Taliban facilitator involved in the transportation of narcotics and munitions, including suicide improvised explosive device material between Iran and southern Afghanistan." Several suspected insurgents were detained.

In separate incidents two days later in the Farah province, which shares a border with Iran, Afghan and Coalition forces killed two Taliban facilitators of foreign fighters—each carrying automatic weapons and large amounts of Iranian money. Colonel Rafael Torres, a Coalition spokesman, noted that ongoing external support for the Taliban "only brings instability and peril to the Afghan people."

That same day, a conversation some 7,000 miles west of Kandahar reflected a completely different reality. In a briefing for a small group of reporters, President Obama said that the United States and Iran had a "mutual interest" in fighting the Taliban. According to the *Washington Post*'s David Ignatius, who attended the meeting, Obama proposed new talks with Iran on the future of Afghanistan, separate from the administration's diplomatic efforts on Iran's nuclear program. Obama told reporters that Iran "could be a constructive partner" with the United States in creating a stable Afghanistan.

This is complete fantasy. The next day the State Department issued the U.S. government's annual report on global terrorism, declaring that Iran "remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism" in the world in 2009:

> Iran's Qods Force provided training to the Taliban in Afghanistan on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives, and indirect fire weapons. Since at least 2006, Iran has arranged arms shipments to select Taliban members, including small arms and associated ammunition, rocket propelled grenades, mortar rounds, 107mm rockets, and plastic explosives.

This vital assistance to terrorists fighting Americans comes not from some rogue military or intelligence group, but at the direction of Iran's leaders—our would-be partners. As then-CIA director Michael Hayden put it in 2008: "It is the policy of the Iranian government, approved to the highest levels of that government, to facilitate the killing of Americans in Iraq." The same is true in Afghanistan.

If President Obama was having trouble understanding that a regime at war with us in Afghanistan is unlikely to partner with us there, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad provided a not-so-friendly reminder the day after Obama's new peace offering. Ahmadinejad hosted Afghan president Hamid Karzai in Tehran and declared that their two nations, together with Tajikistan, could form an alliance that would serve as a bulwark against Western influence in the region.

Some partner.

—*Stephen F. Hayes and Thomas Joscelyn*

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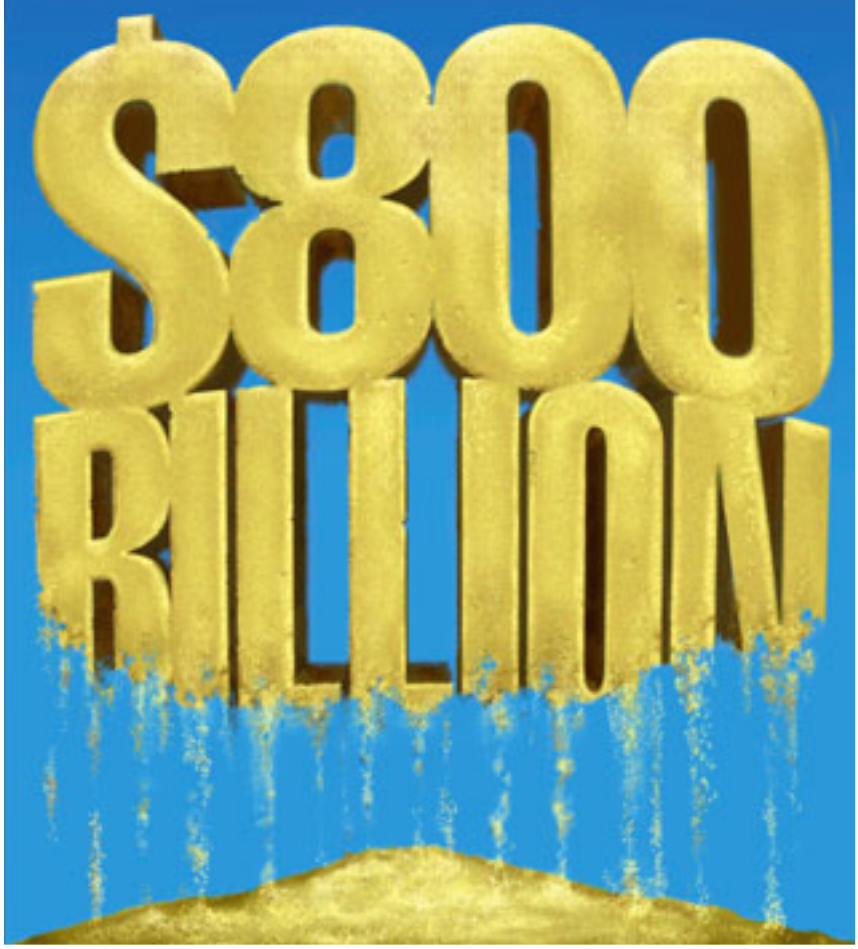
Did the Stimulus Stimulate?

The Obama team gives macroeconomics a bad name.

BY LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY



A recent paper by Alan Blinder and Mark Zandi claims that if not for the response of the federal government, the unemployment rate would be 15.7 percent, far higher than the current 9.5 percent. The press quickly reported that this vindicated the Obama stimulus plan. But the fact is that most of the positive effects cited in their paper came not from the stimulus but from stabilizing actions of the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, and TARP.

The paper argued that fiscal stimulus enacted under both Presidents Bush and Obama lowered the unemployment rate by 1.5 percentage points. But it did not measure either the number of people who found work or the effectiveness with which the Obama stimulus created jobs. Instead, it assumed through the use of economic modeling that the recently enacted stimulus was roughly as effective, dollar for dollar, as similar provisions in the past. It then multiplied the past measures of job creating effectiveness by the number of dollars in the current plan and added the result to the current unemployment rate.

This is the economic equivalent of assuming there are 1,000 angels on the head of a pin, observing that we have 10 pins, and therefore calculating that we must have 10,000 angels. The math is fine. But it sheds no light on the key policy issue—were the recently passed acts of government stimulus cost effective? The degree of cost effectiveness was an assumed number, not one calculated using any version of the scientific method.

One way to correct this is to treat the current stimulus as one would treat any other kind of scientific or social scientific experiment: Form a hypothesis before you run the experiment, run the experiment, and then observe how the results of the experiment compare with your original hypothesis. Christina Romer, who resigned last Friday as chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, and Jared Bernstein, chief economic adviser to Vice President Biden, have done the first part of this experiment. In January 2009, they published a paper using a model similar to the one Blinder and Zandi used to project what would happen if President Obama's proposed stimulus package passed, compared with what would happen if it did not.

The Romer-Bernstein paper has often been cited as saying that if the package passed, the unemployment rate would peak below 8 percent in the middle of 2009 and would decline to below 7.5 percent by now. Obviously this has not happened. The administration, along with Blinder and Zandi, argue that it is not fair to conclude that this proves the package was a failure since Romer and Bernstein under-

GARY LOOKE

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estimated the severity of the recession and that unemployment was already 8.2 percent in the first quarter of 2009, higher than the assumed peak.

I am sympathetic to their argument and Chart 1 corrects for their complaint by raising their estimate of where unemployment started in their experiment. The lowest line provides the original estimate of the path of unemployment provided by Romer and Bernstein on January 9, 2009. The second line replicates the Romer and Bernstein path, but raises the initial unemployment rate from their assumed 7.5 percent to 8.2 percent. This was the actual average of the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2009, the period in which the stimulus was passed. The third line provides a more extreme alternative by raising the initial unemployment rate to the 9.3 percent average of the second quarter 2009. The first modification fully compensates for their objection while the second modification more than compensates for their concern.

Chart 1: Not Even Close . . .

Reality vs. Obama administration (Romer-Bernstein) stimulus projections

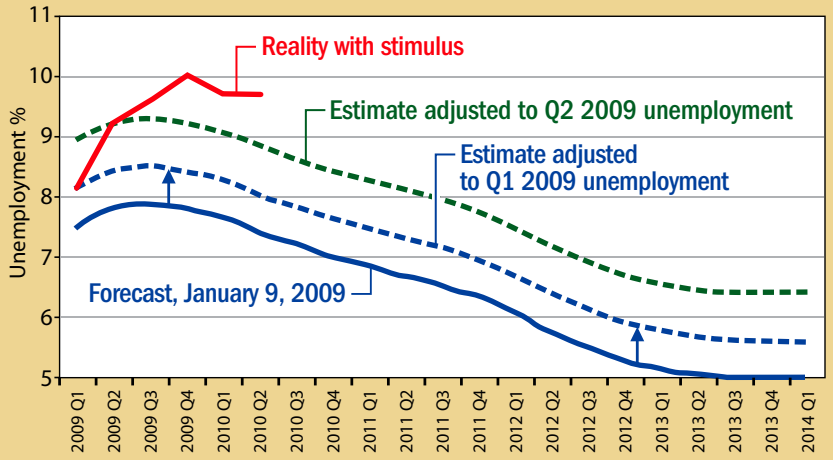
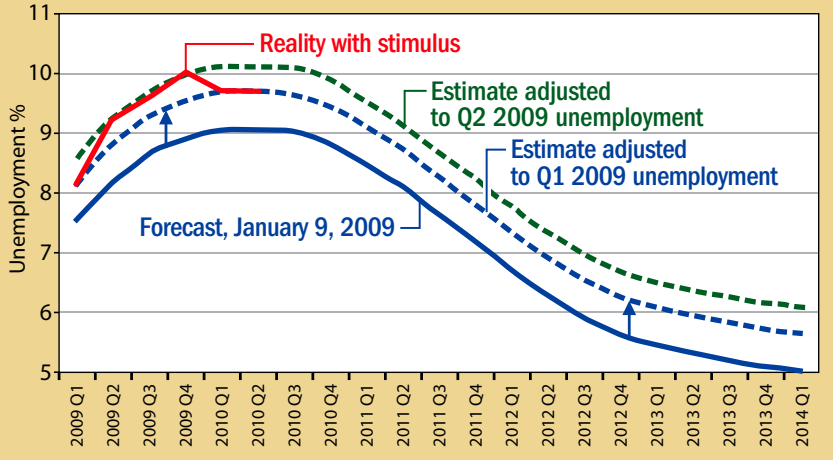


Chart 2: . . . So Why Bother at All?

Reality vs. Obama administration projections *without* stimulus



SOURCE: The Lindsey Group

But as the chart shows, the problem with the stimulus wasn't just the starting point—it was that the stimulus itself has been ineffective at lowering it. Chart 1 shows that the actual unemployment rate, given by the solid line, is not only above the original Romer-Bernstein projections, but also above projections that take account of the "starting point" problem. Actual unemployment has been consistently above all of the projections, regardless of starting point, because the stimulus bill has basically brought no relief in terms of lower unemployment.

Chart 2 shows the Romer-Bernstein projections of what would have happened if the stimulus had not passed, but as in Chart 1, those projections were shifted up to reflect a higher starting unemployment rate. The striking observation is that after correcting for the higher starting point, the actual performance of the economy is almost exactly what Romer and Bernstein said would happen if we had done nothing, rather than passing the $800 billion package.

There are ample reasons for this lack of success. National Economic Council chairman Larry Summers argued that stimulus should be "timely, targeted, and temporary." But the package that passed was neither timely nor targeted and today Congress is faced with making many of the stimulus programs permanent because unemployment remains stubbornly high.

The bill was not timely because the bulk of the funds were disbursed through the cumbersome government contracting process—and often made doubly complicated because the funds were then channeled through state and local governments. Weekly data collected in 2009 (since discontinued) showed a very consistent $7 billion of stimulus disbursed every week starting in the second quarter of 2009. If you are one of the 6.8 million persons unemployed for six months or more, this slow pace of disbursement is anything but timely.

Nor was the bill targeted, at least in any economically sensible way. It was written not by Larry Summers or Christina Romer, but by Democratic members of congressional appropria-

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tions committees, based on the normal political logrolling and reward process. This is the group that notoriously brought us "bridges to nowhere" in the past. The bill was, moreover, rushed through without much review or oversight. One may remember that the stimulus bill was the one that authorized the payment of bonuses to AIG executives, a fact not discovered until well after the bill was signed. This was then followed by days of publicly discussed "mystery" about how such a provision was included. Well-designed targeting would not have included such provisions.

From a macroeconomic perspective, a targeted bill would have injected money directly into the cash flow of American households and small businesses where it was needed. Many of us who supported the administration's call for a stimulus in early 2009 recommended the reduction of the payroll tax for both employers and employees, something with the same net revenue effect as what was passed. Such a payroll tax cut would have provided an incentive at the margin for continued work and employment for more than 90 percent of the labor force. The tax provision in the actual stimulus that passed did so for less than 15 percent of the labor force, and the spending provisions impacted only 2 percent of the labor force even under the administration's assumptions. That is bad targeting.

The Blinder and Zandi paper did note that a few provisions of the stimulus appeared to be particularly effective at pulling forward economic activity. These were the "Cash for Clunkers" program and the first time homeowners' tax credit. But both of these programs were enacted separately from the $800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and together totaled less than $20 billion. How you spend money is as important as how much you spend. Since the beginning of the recession, the number of unemployed has increased by more than 8 million people. For $800 billion, we could have handed every one of these people a check for $100,000—which gives a sense of what was possible with that much money and just how inefficient the actual program was.

It really should be no surprise that the stimulus bill has created far fewer jobs, dollar for dollar, than past stimulus measures. That is why it is methodologically spurious to assert that unemployment is far lower than it would be in its absence. I say that as one whom the administration itself cited as a supporter of a generic stimulus measure back in January 2009. I continue to believe that it would be a mistake to withdraw stimulus from the economy—such as by raising taxes or by letting existing tax provisions expire. This despite the very high deficits we are now experiencing. Our policy problem today is that the bill that was actually passed into law was both so expensive and so badly flawed that it gives the whole concept of macroeconomic stimulus a bad name. ♦

Turning "Cannots" Into "Can-dos"

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Congress has concluded one of the most consequential periods of legislative activity in recent memory. It passed a major stimulus bill, a health care bill, and financial regulatory reform. It dramatically increased spending, taxes, and regulations.

With Congress on recess until September, now is a good time to step back and ask what it all means—for us as individuals, for our businesses, and for our country.

Beyond disagreements over specific bills, there's really only one debate that matters: Do we want a free enterprise economy that empowers individuals, unleashes the creativity of the American people, and a government that understands its limited role? Or do we want a command-and-control economy where government makes all the decisions?

There is something called "The Ten Cannots" that crystallizes this debate. It is often attributed to Abraham Lincoln, but it was actually written by an inspirational speaker, Reverend William Boetcker:

- *You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.*
- *You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.*
- *You cannot help little men by tearing down big men.*
- *You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.*
- *You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.*
- *You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn.*
- *You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.*
- *You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.*
- *You cannot build character and courage by destroying men's initiative and independence.*
- *You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.*

Today, we have a government attempting to do all the "cannots." There's a better path. It's called free enterprise. It operates on a few fundamental principles: It's the private sector that creates jobs, not government; individuals are better at spending and investing money than bureaucrats in Washington; the health and safety of workers and consumers can be achieved without strangling growth and innovation; Americans can compete and win globally if given a level playing field; and the ability to risk, fail, and try again is at the heart of the American Dream.

Free enterprise has the power to turn our "cannot" economy into a "can-do" economy, creating jobs, opportunities, and prosperity. Doesn't it deserve our support?

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Comment at www.chamberpost.com.

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Last in Credibility

The liberal campaign to discredit American health care. BY MERRILL MATTHEWS & DAVID GRATZER

U.S. scores dead last again in healthcare study.
—Reuters, June 23, 2010

While Republicans advocate repeal of President Obama's sweeping health care reforms, Democrats are pulling out all the stops to build support for the legislation. And the president's party has a not-so-secret weapon at its disposal: a network of well-funded academics and researchers working to discredit the existing health care system. The Commonwealth Fund, a liberal think tank headed by a former Democratic staffer, leads the effort.

Typical of the Commonwealth Fund is a recent study claiming that the U.S. health care system ranks last when compared with seven industrialized countries. It's just the latest in a string of policy studies from organizations that want to see a European-style, government-run health care system brought to these shores. Democratic politicians and their allies then use those studies to bolster the case for dramatic reforms.

"Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: How the Performance of the U.S. Health Care System Compares Internationally" was widely reported. National Public Radio warned: "U.S. Spends the Most on Health Care, Yet Gets Least." *The Week* asked if American health care was "Worst in the World?" The *Los Angeles Times* decided to entice readers with, "U.S. is No. 1 in a key area of healthcare. Guess which one." Answer: spending.

In all this coverage, did anyone in the mainstream media raise serious questions about the study's assumptions or methodology? Or delve into the organization behind it?

No, and no. Of course, it's not as if these groups actually hide their leanings. Karen Davis, who was an economics professor before becoming president of the Commonwealth Fund, served as deputy assistant secretary for health policy in the Department of Health and Human Services for all four years of the Carter administration. She advocates a Canadian-style single-payer health care system. And under her leadership, the Commonwealth Fund has published a steady stream of studies that tout the joys and efficiencies of government-run health care systems.

Her agenda in the Obamacare debate? In a president's report, Davis suggested that the Commonwealth Fund had "marshaled its resources this year to produce timely and rigorous work that helped lay the groundwork for the historic Affordable Care Act, signed by President Obama in March 2010."

To that end, the "Mirror, Mirror" study explains that it is judging the health care systems of seven countries based "on five dimensions of a high-performance health system: quality, access, efficiency, equity, and healthy lives." Sounds more like an online dating promo. Scratch beneath the surface and consider that last criterion: healthy lives. American health care gets marked down heavily because Americans are more likely to shoot up, drink up and eat up—not good qualities from a medical point of view, but hardly reflective of the work of our doctors and nurses.

Or what about "equity"? Whereas scholarly comparisons use objective data, the Commonwealth Fund study embraces mostly subjective values, with "equity" being the most indefinable. For left-wing groups, an equitable health care system is the highest goal, which is why the left rejoiced when President Obama nominated and shortly thereafter recess-appointed Dr. Donald Berwick to run the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. One of his oft-quoted statements ("Any health care funding plan that is just, equitable, civilized and humane must—must—redistribute wealth from the richer among us to the poorer and the less fortunate") sounds a lot like the criteria for the Commonwealth Fund study.

But how about cancer survival rates? Or access to the latest technology or the newest medicines? Or where the cutting-edge research and development is occurring? Commonwealth Fund studies don't ask such questions.

The Commonwealth Fund isn't the only group regularly pumping out suspect studies. Others include Families USA and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. They, too, always seem to find that more government control improves quality while lowering costs, and are praised in the media for it, while getting a pass on their assumptions and methodology.

For example, Families USA promotes the notion that Medicaid funds create a state-level "multiplier effect," providing more than a dollar's worth of economic bang for each dollar spent. That's an important finding since the president's reforms will see millions—maybe tens of millions of people—join Medicaid, at a time when state budgets are already stretched.

The multiplier effect is often mentioned in Washington—for example, to defend Congress's stimulus bill, claiming each stimulus dollar would lead to a $1.50 boost in GDP (Americans are still waiting for *that* multiplier to kick in). But for Medicaid?

In its 2010 iteration of the Medicaid multiplier effect, Families USA writes:

> For every dollar a state spends on Medicaid, the federal government contributes a matching amount of money that the state would not otherwise get. . . . This injection of new federal dollars into state economies has a measurable effect on states' business activity, wages, and jobs. The new dollars pass from one person to another in succes-

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sive rounds of spending, generating additional business activity, jobs, and wages. Economists call this the "multiplier effect."

Actually, many economists call it a bunch of hooey. There is a long-running debate over the impact of this Keynesian multiplier effect—or whether it exists at all. But the most glaring omission, the one neither Families USA discusses nor the media question, is whether there is also a "divider effect." Before the federal government can hand out a dollar, it has to take a dollar from somewhere else—from a taxpayer who would have spent or saved the dollar, suggesting that Medicaid spending may actually be a net drag on the economy.

And then, there are the academics. David Himmelstein, a Harvard physician, may be the most widely quoted. President Obama's speeches include his statistics on medical bankruptcies. His most recent study—concluding that 62 percent of all bankruptcies in America are due to medical debt—has been widely reported by the media and was even discussed approvingly at a recent hearing by House Judiciary Committee chairman John Conyers: "This surge in medical bankruptcies demonstrates why health care reform is urgently needed right now."

There's just one catch: The study isn't worth the paper it's written on. Northwestern University professor David Dranove and a coauthor analyzed data from a previous Himmelstein paper on the topic, finding that medical bankruptcies had been overstated by a factor of three to one. In fact, Canada—with its socialized health care system but similar laws—has a higher bankruptcy rate than the United States, calling into question Himmelstein's basic assumptions.

Himmelstein isn't exactly hiding his bias. He cofounded Physicians for a National Health Program and has spent decades writing about the benefits of government-run health care. And though he publishes frequently on American health care, his papers and studies are often controversial and similar: They conclude that the U.S. system is cruel.

But is it? No one would question that the American health care system has problems, but is it really that bad? Drop the ideological prism of the Commonwealth Fund and its allies, and ask a simple question: How good is American medicine?

A reasonable way to judge a health care system is to look at outcomes—how people fare after diagnosis or when stricken with illness. Although there is a dearth of such data, cancer offers an opportunity to make an international comparison: The illness is common; every Western country collects good data; and cancer is a research and treatment priority.

How does the United States fare? Excellently, two major studies suggest. First, a working group associated with the European nongovernmental organization Confederation for Relief and Development completed a study comparing five-year cancer survival rates for several malignancies. Combining the efforts of some hundred researchers and drawing data from almost 2 million cancer patients in 31 countries, the study, published in the August 2008 issue of *The Lancet Oncology*, is groundbreaking.

A reasonable way to judge a health care system is to look at outcomes—how people fare after diagnosis or when stricken with illness.

While France excels in treating women's and Japan in men's colorectal cancer, the U.S. clearly leads other nations in overall survival. These international results replicate those that appeared in a broader cancer review of Europe and the United States. For the 16 types of cancer examined in that paper:

■ American men have a five-year survival rate of 66 percent, compared with only 47 percent for European men. In Europe, only Sweden has an overall survival rate of more than 60 percent.

■ American women have a 63 percent chance of living at least five years after a cancer diagnosis, compared with 56 percent for European women; only five European countries have an overall survival rate of more than 60 percent.

Looking at specific cancers yields striking results:

■ For men, the bladder cancer survival rate in the United States is 15 percent higher than the European average.

■ For American women, the uterine cancer survival rate is 5 percent higher than the European average; for breast cancer, it is 14 percent higher.

■ The United States has survival rates of 90 percent or higher for five cancers (skin melanoma, breast, prostate, thyroid, and testicular), but there is only one cancer for which the European survival rate reaches 90 percent (testicular).

While cancer isn't the only important disease, it does serve as a good proxy for the overall performance of a system. And when hard data are compared, the U.S. system shines.

In the recent Commonwealth Fund study, Canadian health care bests the U.S. system. But a quick review of the literature suggests American patients fare better: They are more likely to survive cancer and a heart attack, and they do better after a transplant operation.

And what about Canadians' universal care and access to free preventative services? In a review of survey data, economists June and David O'Neill find that Americans have greater access to preventive screening tests and higher treatment rates for chronic illnesses. Even more surprising: Canadian poor (covered by the public system) are less healthy relative to the nonpoor than their American counterparts. You'll see none of these results in the latest offering of the Commonwealth Fund, of course.

American health care is far from perfect. It needs reforms. And, yes, some of the harshest criticisms offered by the Obama White House are true: Costs are rising; quality is uneven; transparency is limited. But a meaningful analysis needs to weigh strengths against weaknesses, not promote a partisan agenda disguised as academic research. ♦

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How Does Obama Measure Up?

Some nonpartisan benchmarks.

BY FRED BARNES

President Obama is under water in public opinion polls, judged more unfavorably than favorably. He now pops up in Republican campaign ads that link Democratic candidates to his unpopular administration. And a growing list of Democrats would rather he stay away while they are running for office this year.

He's a political liability to his party. But that may not be the best way to rate Obama's 19-month tenure in the White House. There's a nonpartisan, nonideological measure that's a bit subjective but still renders a valid verdict. Created by Fred Greenstein, professor of politics emeritus at Princeton, it uses six criteria to evaluate the performance of a president.

Greenstein has applied it to presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to Bill Clinton—that is, presidents no longer in office. But it's also fair to use the six criteria to test how a sitting president is doing. Here are the criteria as applied to Obama.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION. This was Obama's strength as a candidate, but it's been a glaring weakness as president. He's a good explainer but a poor persuader. He doesn't inspire. He devoted dozens of speeches in 2009 to touting his health care plan, including a nationally televised address to Congress last September. Public support dwindled. The program passed only because of large Democratic majorities in Congress elected in 2008 and likely to disappear in the midterm election in November.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Because presidents can always command an audience, they're tempted to appear in public too often. Ubiquity undermines the office. The public loses interest, and the effectiveness of the bully pulpit dissolves. Every president since Ronald Reagan has succumbed to this temptation, Obama especially. The worst example: He was interviewed on TV during the halftime of the Duke-Georgetown basketball game last winter.

POLITICAL SKILL. Obama has been a smashing success in putting his stamp on policies and getting them enacted: economic stimulus, health care, financial reform. But that's only half of what's required of a president politically. The other half is fostering and husbanding public support—enthusiasm even—for his programs. Obama has failed at this. Rather than gain popular backing for his health care plan, its passage has spawned a movement to repeal it, led by Republicans and Tea Party activists.

A president needs to be a commanding presence in Washington. Obama hasn't been. He farmed out the drafting of his stimulus and health care bills to Democratic leaders in Congress. The old adage about a president proposing and Congress disposing has sometimes been stood on its head during Obama's presidency. Obama did, however, assert White House control over the financial reform bill.

VISION. Obama had a great one as a candidate. He would change the way Washington does business, end the political polarization, drive lobbyists from the public square, and create a more bipartisan, civil nation's capital. None of that has happened. A vision can be a set of guiding principles that make a president's policies hang together as a coherent whole. To the extent Obama has a vision, it appears to revolve around the notion that the federal government should intervene more aggressively in just about everything. Such a vision turns out to be unpopular in 2010.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY. As best one can tell, Obama has organized his administration effectively. Greenstein suggests, in his book *The Presidential Difference*, that a president's success in designing "effective institutional arrangements" may not become totally clear until after he leaves office. That's probably true in Obama's case.

COGNITIVE STYLE. Obama definitely is a master when it comes to acquiring and sifting information and using it effectively. Obama always seems to have plenty of relevant information that he can call up. He's impressive at trotting out details. Whether this is crucial to presidential success is another thing entirely. The most successful president in the past half-century was Reagan, whose cognitive style and ability to summon details were not among his strengths.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. You know a president has this when you see it. It's the ability to control one's emotions and not let them detract from a president's mission. Bill Clinton, for instance, had little emotional intelligence. Neither did Richard Nixon. Greenstein believes Presidents Eisenhower, Ford, and the first Bush had plenty. Obama, with his cool demeanor, isn't in their class but he's close. Recently, however, he's been peevish in public—not a good sign.

The problem for Obama on these six criteria is that he does well when measured by the three less important ones—cognitive style, organizational ability, and emotional intelligence. On the big ones—communication, political skill, vision—he slips. This, better than poll results, explains why his presidency is in so much trouble. ♦

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Aside from That, He Was Also a Red

The FBI's history of Howard Zinn.

BY RONALD RADOSH

Two weeks ago, the FBI released 423 pages from its files on the late radical historian Howard Zinn. The bureau kept tabs on him for over 25 years, long before he became the bestselling author of *A People's History of the United States*. Followers of Zinn's career will not be surprised to hear the major revelation: Zinn was an active member of the Communist party (CPUSA)—a membership which he never acknowledged and when asked, denied.

When the file was started in 1949, Zinn was a few years out of the Army, where his experience as a bombardier in World War II would decades later lead him to accuse the United States of having perpetrated mass atrocities against civilians in that war. He was working as vice-chairman for a Brooklyn branch of the American Labor party (ALP), by then a group run and dominated by Communists. (New York's Liberal party was created when anti-Communist liberals and laborites left the ALP in 1946.)

In 1948, the ALP backed Henry Wallace for president. Wallace, the former secretary of commerce in Harry Truman's cabinet, ran emphasizing civil rights for blacks at home and appeasement of the Soviet Union as his main foreign policy plank. The campaign was run entirely by the CPUSA, and Wallace was its leading dupe. The ALP was but the first of many Communist-led groups with which Zinn would lend both his name and his active participation.

Zinn's lifelong silence about his membership fits the profile of most American Communists of that era.

Under arrest at a Vietnam war protest

NEWSCOM

Fearing that the Truman administration was taking the nation towards "fascism," some Communist leaders went underground. Most members were covert and were told to infiltrate liberal groups, pretend to be regular progressives, and try to get the gullible to adopt pro-Soviet positions. Of course, Zinn's defenders claim that anything in the FBI files has to be ignored. Noam Chomsky told the *Daily Beast* that a good deal of their reports are "mostly false," since they were taken from informants.

My experience working with FBI dossiers (including my own 500-page file) suggests this is not the case. What one does find are exaggerations or gross mistakes when agents venture their own analyses or summaries, since these reflect their limited knowledge of American Communism. But when an informant offers a straight report about what he or she saw as a result of infiltrating (or belonging to) a Communist organization, it is usually accurate.

The FBI files show that one informant described Zinn as "a person with some authority" in the CP group to which he belonged. He was regarded as so knowledgeable that he taught a class to his comrades on "basic Marxism," which, he instructed them, was an adequate guide to understanding how society worked. In 1948, a confidential informant took part with Zinn in a White House protest, where Zinn indicated "that he is a member of the Communist Party and that he attends Party meetings five times a week in Brooklyn." Another informant who was his seatmate on a train going to a Washington demonstration said that Zinn told him he was a party member. Zinn might have been bragging to impress a mere fellow traveler; more likely, Zinn thought the person was a viable candidate to recruit.

Most damning was a June 12, 1957, report from informant T-1, who was a party member from 1948 to 1953. In a memo called "Affiliation with Communist Movement," the informant told the FBI that when he was transferred to the Williamsburg branch of the party in 1949, "HOWARD ZINN was already a member of that section." It was his impression that "ZINN was not a new member, but had been in the CP for some time." He told the FBI that Zinn as a general rule was always present when meetings took place.

Like other American Reds, Zinn took the course of denial and lying. In 1953, he found himself interviewed by two agents who reported, "Zinn stated that he was not now or was he ever a member" of the party. In fact, Zinn told the agents much the same thing the party instructed its members to tell any-

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one who queried them—that "he was a liberal" though "perhaps some people would consider him to be a 'leftist.'"

No one in the bureau was fooled. Indeed, it appears that there was virtually no front group to which Zinn did not belong. His memberships and activity included working in the ALP, the American Veterans Committee, the American Peace Mobilization, the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, and many, many others. Some would claim that Zinn might have been an idealistic, left-wing activist, eager to join the campaign of many single issue groups. This, however, is more than doubtful. By those years, most people joining these pro-Soviet groups were Communists. To those familiar with how American Communists operated, his memberships appear to be a party assignment.

Zinn had clearly left the party's ranks by the time the New Left and the civil rights movement came on the scene. Indeed, his politics were to the left of the party. The CP supported "Negotiations Now" as a way out of Vietnam; Zinn proposed unilateral withdrawal. To be sure, he supported Third World Marxist regimes like Vietnam and Cuba. He toyed with radical groups at home such as the Maoist Progressive Labor party and the Trotskyist Socialist Workers party. He also gave his support to the young black militants of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther party.

But in a 1965 article found in the FBI files, Zinn praised "college radicals" for having "no illusion about Reds." They "have seen Stalinism unmasked," he wrote. "They have watched aggression, subversion and double-dealing engaged in by all sides, West as well as East, 'free world' as well as 'Communist world.'" His position was now that of moral equivalence. It allowed him to be "critical" of the East while saving most of his fire for the "imperialist" policies of the United States. While the Communists "will use any means to gain their ends," as Zinn put it, the horrors in Vietnam convinced him that the United States too "will use any means to gain its ends." It was a position many ex-Communists still on the left would take; criticize the CPUSA for slavishly following the Soviets, but save most of your ammunition for condemning the United States.

Soon, Zinn would be taking students out of his Spelman College classes to join protest marches, declaring that the United States had "been a police state for a long time," and traveling to North Vietnam in 1968. A short time afterwards, he began to write his simplistic paean to the "people," and to develop a new far left narrative about America's past. As one of his supporters wrote last week, "he was . . . an example of how genuine intellectual thought is always subversive." Writing his tendentious history, which influenced a new generation to regard our country's past with disdain, became his substitute for the old activism. That legacy is worse than anything he ever did as a member of the Communist party. ♦

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Deval Patrick's Racino Problem

Why Massachusetts pols are addicted to gambling.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Boston

Like his friend Barack Obama, Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick campaigned with dire warnings of major crisis and then, once in office, decided he felt like thinking about something else. In Obama's case, of course, this involved leaving to one side the biggest financial crisis in history in order to pursue a national health care plan. In Patrick's case, it meant transforming the Athens of America into the Atlantic City of New England. Elected in 2006, Patrick aimed to open up the Bay State to what he called "destination casinos." Unlike the president, he failed. Like the president, he is discovering that the issue has become an albatross that will flap alongside him to the end of his term.

Patrick's plan was for Massachusetts to cover a $1.3 billion budget shortfall by selling three gambling licenses at $200 million apiece, and then taxing the take at 27 percent. The idea was popular in the abstract until voters began to educate themselves on the economics of it. When you factor in the damage to competing businesses (from restaurants to theaters to sports stadiums), the cost of infrastructure and law enforcement, and the steep toll of gambling addiction and its treatment, gambling takes much more out of an economy than it puts in—about three times as much, according to the economist Earl Grinols.

So far, so Obama-esque. But, unlike the president, Patrick was not able to push his plan through. Sal DiMasi, then the speaker of the Massachusetts house, laid out the numbers, and the legislature killed the bill—really killed it, by a vote of 108-46.

A week ago, something strange happened. On the very last day of the legislature's final session, DiMasi's successor as speaker, Robert DeLeo, presented Patrick with a bill that included everything he had fought so hard for two years before—all three super-casinos. Slightly lower licensing fees would be compensated for with new tax levels of 25 and 40 percent, permitting Patrick to make the same promise (equally dubious) of $400 million a year in new revenue. Patrick had been pummeled in the polls for his love affair with casinos. They had nearly (and may yet) cost him his political career. So what did he do when his close ally and friend laid the gift in his lap?

He refused to sign it. Patrick sent the bill back to the legislature amended (per gubernatorial prerogative) to show the kind of bill he *would* have signed, adding an elaborate schedule of affirmative-action set-asides for minorities, women, and the disabled, broken down in stages to apply to design and architectural jobs, construction jobs, and permanent jobs. But this was a mere good-faith gesture to his troops. The legislature has adjourned. A newly elected legislature is scheduled to come into session in January.

This was a bizarre outcome. The vote in the house was 115-36, which is veto-proof, and had the support of both Democratic and Republican leaders. The vote in the senate was 25-15, which was 2 votes away from veto-proof. A massive increase in gambling has been the main cause of Patrick's short life in electoral politics. (He headed the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division under Bill Clinton.) The legislature passes the massive increase in gambling by majorities so overwhelming that it doesn't actually need the governor's signature at all (two votes in the senate being easy enough to flip). And no new gambling at all results.

The governor's explanation was that the bill contained something he hadn't asked for—"racinos." The state has four dying racetracks. DeLeo's father worked his whole life at one of them, Suffolk Downs, down the street from the Winthrop district he represents. (Winthrop is the pretty peninsula full of double-deckers and lace-curtain-Irish mansions that you see when your plane is taxiing at Logan airport.) DeLeo's idea is to fill these places up with slot machines. This, he thinks, will produce "jobs." Patrick has two objections to racinos: First, they would produce enough competition to render his beloved "destination casinos" unprofitable. And second, although he puts it rather more delicately, people who play the high-stakes table at a "destination casino" don't get addicted and do all those horrible things you see on the news shows the way people who gamble at the Wonderland dog-track would.

It is this distinction between working-class and upper-class gambling that most Massachusetts pundits seized on when they sought to explain the ostensible breach between Patrick and DeLeo. The split in Massachusetts politics is one not of party, but of class. While Democrats still hold a 144-16 advantage in the state house and send a liberal delegation to Washington, they have lost their hold on the public. They still outnumber Republicans 3-to-1 in the state, but a majority—a *majority*—of voters are independents. Patrick's coalition is usually described as made up of liberals and labor. Liberals are, among other things, the Harvard sociologists, pro bono lawyers, and bearded guitarists of popular caricature.

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But labor is something different than it is elsewhere. It is not only a collection of government employees, or the subset of liberals who don't ride in limousines. There are also still credible (or sort of credible) representatives of the industrial working class. They hold a kind of job that has been kept on life support by the Big Dig, the largest highway project in the history of the country, at least if you measure it in dollars. Ted Kennedy won the Big Dig for metropolitan Boston in the late 1980s, and the money is only now running out. The leaders of the AFL-CIO and the Building Trades are clamoring for the jobs spigot to be turned back on. They are the loudest supporters of racinos, because DeLeo has convinced them that racinos are all the spigot they're going to get.

There are two things about this explanation, though, that make no sense. The first is that the spigot is on, isn't it? What about the stimulus? True, many Massachusetts politicians complain that a shockingly disproportionate amount of the stimulus has been gobbled up by two nunchuck-shaped, gerrymandered congressional districts—the 3rd, which links Worcester to Fall River and is represented in Congress by Jim McGovern, who sits on the Budget Committee; and the 4th, Barney Frank's district, which connects liberal Brookline and Newton with working class New Bedford. Still, Massachusetts has received at least $5 billion out of the president's stimulus, which ought to be more than the racinos will produce.

The second thing that needs explaining is this: If Patrick's challenge lies in balancing liberal and labor interests, then surely it is the latter that he has to shore up. Charlie Baker, his Republican challenger for governor in November, is running only 6 points behind him, considerably closer than Scott Brown was a month before he demolished Martha Coakley in the special election for Ted Kennedy's Senate seat last January. "Had enough?" is Baker's motto. It seems aimed at wooing the working class voters who followed behind Brown's pickup truck last winter, not at breaking Patrick's hold on the coffeehouses of Cambridge.

The best explanation for why gambling failed despite all the votes in favor of it, is that the Democrats in the state house needed gambling to fail and they needed to vote in favor of it.

They needed to be on-record as supporting mega-casinos because Patrick has turned the gambling industry into a lifeline of campaign funding for his allies. Slot machine companies, scratch card companies, racetrack developers, and others are among the biggest contributors to Massachusetts politicians. The companies contribute themselves, they hire lobbyists who contribute, and their employees contribute as individuals. In April the *Boston Globe* reported that the New Jersey-based consulting firm that the state paid to come up with the financial estimates for gambling also was being paid by DeLeo's campaign.

At the same time, Patrick, DeLeo, and their allies need gambling to fail because gambling is terrible public policy. Promises of huge revenue streams always accompany its introduction, but these are easily enough debunked in theory, and other states have failed to realize them in practice. A magnificent piece of economic digging was done by the Bentley University economist John Edward in the *Lowell Sun*, the paper that has done the hardest-hitting analysis of the gambling controversy. Lowell, maybe because it is only three miles from the New Hampshire border, has a keener eye on the larger New England economy. Edward noted that when New Hampshire did a cost-benefit analysis of opening one casino near Massachusetts, they estimated it would create $110 million, and possibly as much as $220 million, in negative social externalities. As drafted, the Massachusetts bill, which would create five mega-casinos not near but *in* the state, budgeted $28 million to cover the same negative effects.

And almost every other index we have of the benefits of the gambling industry has worsened in a climate of economic downturn. The strongest argument for state-sponsored gambling back in 2008 involved interstate competition. Connecticut's Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos, both owned by recently invented Indian tribes, are only a hundred miles from Boston, and they suck tens of millions of dollars out of Massachusetts every year. But gambling has proved highly susceptible to economic conditions (why shouldn't it?), and it was recently reported that the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation was trying to renegotiate $2 billion worth of debt and was angling to get its largely Malaysian lenders to take a haircut.

In the more recent version of the gambling bill, tax revenues, not leakage to other states' casinos, have dominated discussion, but this argument, too, is weaker in an age of financial crisis and big deficits. Gambling is, as everyone realizes, a tax on the poor. This is true even where the state uses private companies as tax farmers, the way Governor Patrick has intended to. In an economy like the present one, if you hike taxes on the poor through a levy on their paychecks, you get accused of troglodytic, pre-Keynesian economic thinking. Why does taxing the poor suddenly turn into stimulus if you do it in an atmosphere of ringing fruit machines, rolling dice, disco balls, and hookers?

Here is where the story line may diverge most radically from that of Obama and health care. It is significant that the debate in both the senate and the house—with hundreds of millions of dollars in state contracts at stake and years of legislative work in the balance—took only a few minutes, as if the vote had not been that important. Maybe Patrick and DeLeo realize that the reason they lost public opinion over gambling two years ago is that they lost the argument over gambling. But as long as gambling interests don't realize that, there will still be good money in it for politicians. ♦

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The Great Plane Robbery

Russia's troubled Sukhoi Superjet 100

BY REUBEN F. JOHNSON

The great white hope of Russian civil aviation, at the Farnborough air show

Farnborough Airport

Russia's aerospace industry is trying to convince the world that it has turned the corner and is about to be able to compete in the commercial aircraft market. Soon, we are told, we will see the Sukhoi Superjet 100 regional airliner parked on the ramps right next to Embraer, Boeing, and Airbus. Having experienced a long drought in commercial aircraft sales, Sukhoi would have us believe that the Superjet is now selling almost as fast as Apple's iPad.

Except that the entire program may be a scam on a level that is unprecedented even by Russian standards. Several "orders" for the aircraft were just announced at the Farnborough International Airshow in late July, but whether they are real, whether the carriers placing the orders will ever be able to use their Superjets, and whether the aircraft will even be delivered is unclear.

Worst of all, the European firms that are partners on the program and the EU agencies charged with maintaining aviation safety standards show a casual indifference to problems with the aircraft's design and repeated failures of the engine during certification testing.

There are numerous critics of the Superjet in Russia asking worthwhile questions. First: Why was it necessary to design a 75-95 seat short-haul aircraft from scratch when Brazil's Embraer would have been happy to sign a deal to license-produce its E-series of regional jets in Russia—an aircraft in the same class. The Superjet design represents one of the more expensive examples in history of reinventing the wheel.

Sukhoi built nothing but fighter aircraft for decades. The latest estimates for the Superjet's development costs are at about $3.5 billion—more than four times the original projected cost. (Embraer's E-series, by comparison, cost approximately $1 billion to design and develop.)

Countries that have an aerospace industry sometimes reinvent the wheel anyway—as designing or building a plane locally rather than buying it from another country is good politics. It costs more money, but also preserves jobs, retains a core set of personnel and technological competencies, keeps politicians in their elected seats, etc. But nothing about the Superjet has anything to do with trying to preserve Russia's aerospace industry.

When I asked one of the most senior Russian industry officials a few years ago about the objectives of this program, he simply shook his head and said, "*no, skolko deneg spizdili*" ("you cannot believe how much money they have f—ed off with"). "Like so many other high-profile, government projects in Russia, the Superjet has become a fabulous mechanism for people to put money into their own pockets," said another Moscow-based colleague.

There is an almost tacitly accepted tradition in Russia that high government officials are supposed to take advantage of large, state-funded initiatives to enrich themselves. Ever since Count Sergei Witte oversaw the building of the major rail networks under Czar Nicholas II at the end of the 19th century—including the famous Trans-Siberian railroad—and became a nouveau riche St. Petersburg courtier in the process, the persons in charge of major national programs have used their positions to derive personal benefit.

The difference between then and now is that in the past Russia actually ended up with technological and industrial achievements that had some benefit for the economy at large. Witte became a wealthy man, but at the end of the day Russia also had a functioning railway system. In contrast, it remains to be seen if the Superjet will ever amount to anything that benefits anyone other than a small circle of the select.

The Superjet was supposed to spur a financial revival for Russia's aerospace sector, but the industry has seen little windfall from the spending on this program, says a senior editor at one of the most respected industry publishing houses in Moscow. "There has been some work for GSS [Sukhoi Civilian Aircraft] and the engine designers, but when you start talking about the third-tier suppliers—people who make hydraulic systems, actuators, and the other smaller bits of an

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airplane—all of this kit on the Superjet is made by foreign suppliers, so this is not saving jobs or putting Russian aerospace industry back to work on any kind of a measurable scale."

Confirmation of this came three years ago from GTK Rossiya, which operates the fleet of aircraft used by Russia's presidential administration—and by Vladimir Putin's alma mater, the Federal Security Service. They rejected the Superjet in 2007 partly on the grounds that it contained far too many foreign-made components. Specifically, the aircraft's SaM146 engine is produced by PowerJet, a joint venture of France's Snecma/SAFRAN consortium and Russia's NPO Saturn/Rybinsk Motors.

And it is the status of that engine that has raised the most questions of late. An internal, nine-page memo written by Russia's deputy minister for industry and trade, Denis Manturov—addressed to his boss and head of the ministry, Viktor Khristenko—details what he sees as some significant flaws in the engine's design. In the memo, which was leaked to the press, Manturov says he wishes

> to draw attention to the fact that there are defects that have been discovered in the course of this [engine] testing located in the hot section [the part of the engine PowerJet is responsible for], and there has been an occurrence of the destruction of the disk clip in the third stage of the compressor section that took place on 9 February 2010 with engine number 146101/2 during the 187th flight hour of Superjet 100 tail number 95003, when the incident occurred and it was determined by PowerJet to have been caused by a destruction of a fragment of the third stage compressor disk.
>
> I also wish to draw attention to the fact that this defect has a repetitive character: The first incident took place in 2009, the second on 9 February 2010 and the third in March 2010 while the SaM146 engine was undergoing test runs on the stand.

This document, dated June 3, was leaked at the beginning of July, which is not unusual in and of itself, almost two weeks after the European Aviation Safety Administration (EASA), which is the EU's answer to the FAA, certified the engine as safe for passenger aircraft operations.

I was curious as to how EASA could have certified the engine without the causes of these defects having been properly identified and without some technical evaluation and "get well" design change having been elucidated. EASA itself offers no insight into these issues, only stating that "with the issuance of the EASA Type Certificate, the compliance of the engine with our certification specifications has been safely demonstrated."

Asked about the design defects outlined in Manturov's memo, EASA responded that "questions concerning the engine should be directed to the engine manufacturer," which is the PowerJet joint venture. Indeed so, but the questions ought to be directed to PowerJet by EASA itself, since they are the regulatory authority of record. Even so, I sent a copy of Manturov's memo to Snecma/SAFRAN in France, to which I received no response. One of my colleagues at the Farnborough Airshow was told by the CEO of Snecma, "I have not heard of this memo," which is quite extraordinary given the level of importance that the French engine-maker has assigned to this program. It certainly looks as if EASA has certified a fundamentally flawed and unsafe engine.

All of which precipitated a call while I was on the tarmac at Farnborough for me to attend an audience with the CEO of PowerJet, Jean-Paul Ebanga, to discuss this issue. Ebanga was clearly annoyed at having to answer questions about the memo, and in a style that is quite typical for the French aerospace industry, he launched into a diatribe against people who are paying any attention to the document.

"The facts are that all certification has been performed successfully" and that "there is nothing that would have occurred during the process of testing the engine [at Rybinsk] that the Russian side could have hidden from the EASA inspection and certification team. Starting to argue about other matters does not address the requirements of our customers," he said.

There were, however, no explanations forthcoming as to why Manturov would have relayed these details in a memo to his boss, but Ebanga stated that the memo was chiefly "written for Russian internal political objectives" and that he was not going to comment on this type of document.

These questions remain unanswered to this day. Not surprisingly, one of my Russian colleagues who is aware of problems with the Sukhoi program told me that "if any of these Superjets ever go into service with an airline, you will never see me flying on one of them."

Then there is the strange nature of the orders for the Superjet that were signed at the Farnborough show. The customers are an Indonesian carrier, Kartika Airlines, a new leasing company based in Bermuda, Pearl Aircraft, Orient-Thai Airlines, and Gazpromavia, the air wing of the Russian natural gas monopoly Gazprom.

Excluding the Russian order, only Orient-Thai qualifies as an established airline, albeit one with a poor safety record. Indonesia's Kartika has only three aging aircraft in its fleet, but has ordered 30 Superjets, which prompted a Russian airline industry analyst to comment, "Even if the company finds the money for the planes, where will it get so many additional profitable routes?"

The general assumption is that these Superjet orders are not serious and are instead tribute being paid by Indonesia, Malaysia, and others in order to guarantee their continued ability to order Russian fighter aircraft.

So other than being a great plane robbery that allows a lot of money to disappear into offshore bank accounts, the Superjet also promotes more military exports—a business controlled by Sergei Chemezov, a longtime former KGB pal of Putin. All of which explains why the secret police crowd in the Kremlin are content to let the Superjet charade go on. They know they will benefit even more than those who have already made themselves rich in the process. ♦

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The Zombie Economy

The life jacket the government threw to the private sector has become a straitjacket

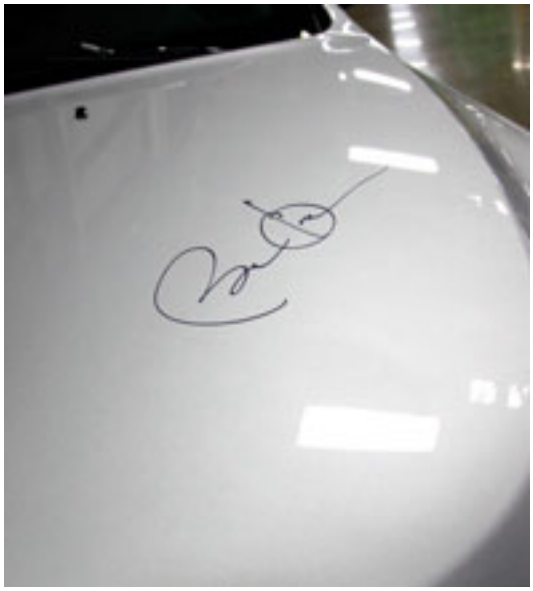
By Matthew Continetti

Since 2008, the federal government and the Federal Reserve have spent some $3 trillion to secure the financial system and prevent a second Great Depression. What did all this money buy us? A really expensive life jacket.

The economy did not collapse. Growth, while low, has returned. Unemployment, while high, is lower than it otherwise might have been. Institutions and companies that otherwise would have been destroyed are still around, because the government owns or controls them. We own Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac at a cost, so far, of $145 billion. We own AIG at a cost, so far, of $182 billion. We own GM and Chrysler—and bailed out GMAC and Chrysler Financial—for a cost of around $80 billion.

The economic, social, and political consequences of allowing private actors to suffer the consequences of bad decisions were deemed by the government to be too great. So, because too much debt was at the root of the problem, the government stepped in and transferred the debt from the private sector to the public sector. It helped that many of the private actors who received government support also had political connections. Not all of the bailed out institutions were private companies, of course. In order to prevent the layoffs of public employees that would result if the states balanced their books, the federal government stepped in with aid. And Fannie and Freddie existed in the gray world between public and private.

The life jacket kept the economy above water. But staying afloat in the sea is not the same as reaching the shore. It would be silly to suggest that the current economy is desirable, or that the underlying imbalances have been worked out. Yet the administration is in the unusual position of doing exactly that. When Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner wrote a *New York Times* op-ed last week with the headline "Welcome to the Recovery," it was hard not to laugh. When President Obama visited Detroit on July 30 and pronounced the auto bailout a success, his words and demeanor seemed disconnected from reality. Of course the government will be able to preserve manufacturing jobs in the Midwest if it spends tens of billions of dollars on two companies. But what's the larger price to be paid, in debt and taxes and misallocated resources?



A presidentially autographed Jeep: But does it qualify for the $7,000 tax credit?

AP / PABLO MARTINEZ

What the Obama administration doesn't want to acknowledge is that the life jacket has become a straitjacket. Remove it, and more people will lose jobs and livelihoods and health insurance. Maintain it, and the mounting public debt, combined with the sense that the economy is split between government insiders and everybody else, will provoke a political backlash. It would be easier to remove the jacket if the private sector were leading an economic boom.

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But that isn't the case. And so the economy is in twilight. The government props up what blogger Arnold Kling calls "unsustainable patterns of specialization and trade" because it is (understandably) afraid of unemployment.

It isn't supposed to be this way. In an efficient economy, failed companies would die, state governments would balance their books, and the housing market would be rid of government intervention. In an efficient economy, the pain during a correction would be sharp, but also swift. The truth is we'll never know, because we don't have an efficient economy. We have a zombie economy.

The zombie economy is filled with unproductive entities that exist only through government life support. The government uses the zombies not to make money, but to promote an agenda. In the zombie economy, where some firms with connections get help while others do not, politics matters more than prosperity. Government cheerleads for specific interests and pits one group of Americans against another. The short-term benefits of the undead economy are visible and touted as signs of success, while the long-term costs are ignored because they haven't yet materialized. But one day they will, and future generations will pay the high taxes and high interest rates that the zombies will leave in their wake.

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Consider the auto bailout. Desperate to trumpet an economic accomplishment, over the last week or so the president visited GM, Chrysler, and Ford plants. This is the first time in six years that all three domestic auto manufacturers are in the black, which Obama attributes to the government's ownership stake in GM and Chrysler. (Taking credit for Ford's success is a stretch, since it didn't accept government assistance. But that hasn't stopped Obama from trying.)

It's true that GM and Chrysler's government-backed bankruptcy helped change some of the domestic auto companies' worst practices. It's also true that, in recent months, business has picked up. But the auto bailout didn't change the fact that these huge companies have been making a lot of cars that Americans do not want to buy.

Indeed, it may make that problem worse. In July, when Obama visited a Chevy plant, he test-drove a Chevy Volt, GM's plug-in hybrid. Obama likes the Volt because it's environmentally friendly. But it's also impractical and terribly expensive at $41,000. Taxpayer money, in other words, is subsidizing at great cost a product that only the wealthy will be able to afford in order to make the green lobby feel good. This is how Obama defines success?

The Volt is a perfect example of big government and big business engaging in mutual folly. It's a boondoggle. It's akin to an expensive weapons system that liberals try desperately to cut from the Pentagon budget. No doubt the program will continue for as long as taxpayers provide the financing. But what will happen when GM has to rely on consumer demand to survive, and all the dollars that have been invested in the Volt see no return?

Rather than working to hasten the day when the government sells its stake in these companies, Obama seems to relish his role as commander in chief of GM and Chrysler. He touts products like the Volt and the Jeep Cherokee (which has a much larger carbon footprint than the Volt and is also, perhaps not unrelatedly, a car that people actually want). He acts as a spokesman for the United Auto Workers, telling laborers at the plants he visits that if the dastardly Republicans had their way, they would be out of their jobs. He participates in propaganda exercises such as GM CEO Ed Whitacre's April *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, "The GM Bailout: Paid Back in Full," in which Whitacre used the fact that GM had paid back a single loan to the government to spread the false impression that the government no longer was in the car business. That was a lie, of the sort that is all too common when government enmeshes itself in private enterprise.

It's unseemly. By picking winners and losers, Obama raises the question of why the government bails out some companies and not others. By gloating over the zombies' short-term success, he fosters resentment among the unemployed who have not benefited from government bailouts—the car dealers, say, who were forced to close as part of the political bankruptcy settlement. This type of politicized economy hurts the market's public reputation. The zombie economy is zero-sum. The man with the most ties to Washington wins. The man without them? Sorry, pops.

The rationale behind many zombie policies is a gutter Keynesianism. John Maynard Keynes famously laughed off concerns about the long-term consequences of his policies by pointing out that, "in the long run, we are all dead." A clever line (by a childless man), but it didn't answer the criticism that stimulus measures just delay the necessary balancing of accounts. They may keep

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the patient upright. But one day he will have to stand or fall on his own.

For example, take state and local governments. Over the last two decades, they went on a spending spree. They hired public employees in boom times without thinking what might happen when the economy went bust. When the lean times inevitably returned, the states faced the prospect of mass layoffs. Once again the federal government stepped in, shifted the debt upward, and delayed the painful adjustments necessary to make state and local budgets sustainable. According to the nonprofit ProPublica, more than $58 billion of the 2009 stimulus bill went to aid for state and local governments.

That was only the beginning, however. This week Congress is expected to authorize an additional $26 billion in aid. Chances are that won't be enough either, because state and local revenues won't be able to support overextended state and local workforces until the economy is booming again. Unfortunately, no one has any idea when that is going to happen—and even then, it's likely the states will just go back to binging.

Not every state behaved irresponsibly. But those that did became the equivalent of zombies, dependent on the federal government for sustenance. The debates surrounding aid to state and local governments follow a familiar pattern. Critics of unconditional aid are routinely caricatured as heartless or cruel. Ask why government is favoring one class of occupations over others, and you will be called anti-teacher or anti-cop or anti-fire fighter. Government spending, you will be told, is the best form of economic stimulus—even though the trillions that already have been spent have brought nothing but doldrums. The message from Washington is that the status quo must be perpetuated. The message is that the zombies must not be allowed to die.

The same is true for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. One can argue over the degree to which they contributed to the financial crisis. But one cannot deny their involvement. Yet the two institutions continue to suck up taxpayer dollars. They've faced few consequences for their actions. The Obama administration claims it will support reform of Fannie and Freddie next year. But that is the political equivalent of saying you'll go on a diet after Thanksgiving. Meanwhile Washington has heaped policy on top of policy in a desperate effort to keep people in homes they cannot afford. On August 5, for instance, Fannie announced that under its Affordable Advantage program, a buyer can obtain a mortgage with—this is not a joke—only a $1,000 down payment. From autos to spending to housing, the zombie economy is characterized by a fundamental lack of seriousness.

Yeah, we took the bailout, but, really, we're competitive now.

AP / PABLO MARTINEZ

We may have to get used to it. The economists Kenneth Rogoff and Carmen Reinhardt have found that it takes a long time for economies to recover from financial crises. It took a decade for America to recover from the Great Depression. It's been two decades since Japan's real-estate bubble burst, and their economy is still in the doldrums. Twenty-first-century America may be no different.

The parallels may extend beyond economics. Japan's Lost Decades have been accompanied by political upheaval, with governments rising and falling quickly and entrenched parties suddenly collapsing. It is not unreasonable to imagine something similar happening in America, with the electorate lurching from one party to the other as it struggles with the consequences of sluggish growth and debt overhang.

Neither party has thought through what the political consequences might be if America is at the beginning of a lost decade or decades. The Democrats are content with the zombie economy. It offers them the opportunity to meddle with industry, to build up the welfare state, and to engage in their passion of dividing the pie over growing the pie. The Republicans, meanwhile, have yet to offer an alternative beyond straightforward opposition to the Democrats. That may suffice to win the November elections. But it spells trouble in 2011, when the public will hold Republicans as well as Democrats responsible for unemployment, taxes, and the deficit.

The good news is such an agenda isn't too difficult to figure out. It begins with a simple imperative. Kill the zombies. ♦

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Mao Zedong and All That

A telling battle over China's history curriculum

By Ross Terrill

The millions visiting World Expo in Shanghai find no mention at the China pavilion of Mao Zedong. Nor did those attending the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics in 2008 encounter any mention of Chairman Mao. Yet while the Communist government tries to present an apolitical and cosmopolitan face to the "international community," the balance sheet on the PRC's founder is hotly disputed among Chinese educators and officials.

Recently, a six-year-old Beijing boy, shown by his father an old magazine cover featuring Mao, said: "Yeah, I've heard of him! It's Chairman Mao." The boy knew Mao's face from bank notes. "Certainly, I know of Mao," the child added omnisciently. Actually, his knowledge of the dictator—like that of hundreds of millions of young Chinese—is close to zero.

Grandfather may have related stories of the Mao era ("my three years feeding pigs in the countryside"). Father may have told the boy of farmers clutching pictures of Mao as a talisman in the surging flood waters of the Yangtze River in 1991. But the child regularly sees more images of Colonel Sanders, Yao Ming, and Kobe Bryant than of Mao. Isn't Mao, who died in 1976, a dead issue? Hasn't China joined the world of the G-20 and the WTO? Not quite.

In Shanghai, a high school textbook, *History*, painstakingly crafted a mile or two from the Expo site and launched at schools in 2006, suggested what reformers think should await the six-year-old. Here Chinese history is less conflicted and more "harmonious" (a tactful nod to President Hu Jintao's favorite term for his governance) than in previous Chinese textbooks. There is less about political leaders, battles, and China's past sufferings, more about technology, economic forces, religion, environment, and social behavior.

The deputy editor of the volume, Zhou Chunsheng, told a Chinese newspaper, "We want pupils to understand the background of what they see around them outside the classroom." What Shanghai pupils see around them includes World Expo pavilions, cranes expanding the city's size by the month, foreign businessmen hopping out of limousines, China's manned space flights returning to earth, and shops where a pair of Italian shoes goes for $500. Professor Zhou, praising the Western Enlightenment, rejecting struggle and mayhem, asserting "knowledge is power," predicted that "the 21st century will bring a 'Battle of the Talents.'"

Following the French historian Fernand Braudel, the authors of *History* deemphasize the nation state. The violent unification of China in 221 B.C. by strongman Qin Shihuang, a hero of Mao's, is not dwelt upon. Nor are famous peasant rebellions and Machiavellian coups that brought down dynasties. Indeed, as the textbook's title implies, this is not Chinese history at all, but the story of civilization, with China spliced in to illustrate its themes. Globalization impinges, naturally giving a lesser role to nativist Mao. Said chief editor Su Zhiliang, "We hope our book reflects mankind's actual existence."

But, revealingly, *History* was canceled in 2007 and hurriedly replaced by a more politically correct and nationalistic text. Attacks on the book had rolled in from the left ("Bill Gates has replaced Mao Zedong," "Where is Marxism?," "Where is class struggle?"). Pathetically, Su defended himself: "Putting Chinese history together with world history under the banner 'Civilization' avoids much repetition." But three years of pilot use and repeated prepublication consultations with Beijing did not save his textbook. Su remarked bitterly of his aborted child: "This must be the shortest life of any textbook in the six decades of the PRC."

The hot potatoes of Mao and Chinese nationalism doomed *History*. It is not easy to discuss Mao, but it is unacceptable to omit him, especially if left-wingers are

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watching. Prosperous post-Mao China adjusts to the international community—or does it?

A joke used to circulate in the Soviet Union: "The future is certain; only the past is unpredictable." The quip mocked the cockiness of Marxist historical optimism and Moscow's faking of the Stalinist past. China, wrestling with its past, limns its future.

The Su-Zhou textbook had asked excellent questions of the pupils at the end of each chapter. "Compare and assess the contribution of Arab, Chinese, and Ancient Greek cultures to modern science." It introduced the 19th century not with Western imperialism against China, but with Western leaps in science and technology. It hailed inventions in electricity, mechanics, and other fields as "advancing mankind." The account of Einstein spoke of this "American contribution to the age of nuclear energy." The book was full of an excitement at the West's modern progress conspicuously lacking, for example, in Howard Zinn's dismal *People's History of the United States*.

A table listed 12 key innovations in science and technology during the 19th century and noted that 4 were German, 3 French, 2 American, and one each from Sweden, Britain, and Italy. None was Chinese. "Why was it in Western Europe that science flourished?" the pupils were asked in an exercise. Modestly, the book omitted Xian and Beijing and other Chinese cities from its choice of world history's three most notable imperial capitals; Rome, Istanbul, and Paris got the nod. The students were asked: "Why do no Chinese capitals make the list? If one were to be included, which would you choose and for what reasons?" The book gave more credit than Western leftists do to benefits from the Cold War's "order for stability and peace," even, very boldly for China, noting that it led to the "eventual democratization of the formerly oppressed."

Hey, nice flowers. Who's the guy?

NEWSCOM

Defending his upbeat textbook, Su pointed out that because Marx spoke of progress in history, all progress can be said to be a fulfillment of Marx. The text's stress on how experimentalism undermined theology in the history of Western science could be taken—probably was meant to be taken—as analogous to the post-Mao undermining of Marxism-Leninism in China by the policy of "seeking the truth from facts." But left-wing nationalists rejected the whole notion of Chinese history as just one part of world history.

In the textbook's account of World War II and its aftermath, Mao was mentioned only once, for his welcome on August 9, 1945, to the Soviet Union's declaration of war on Japan, at the eleventh hour before Japan's surrender. But room was found for two lyrical paragraphs about Christmas Day, 1914, when on the Western front German and British soldiers "laid aside weapons, shook hands, sang Christmas carols, exchanged gifts, played soccer together, and took photos of each other." The textbook remarked poignantly: "The Christmas Day ceasefire did not endure and ferocious fighting resumed, but for a season these enemies deep in a chasm of hatred built a bridge to their common human feelings."

As Internet debate raged, one opponent of the new text was unexpectedly insightful: "If pupils do not understand the rise and fall of Western nations, they cannot understand China's modern humiliations; if they do not study the Bolshevik Revolution and the French Revolution, they will not understand the concrete record of Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao Zedong." The last name jumps out like a red light on a German freeway. In China you must not link Hitler with Mao! Nor are you allowed to analyze the link between Mao's actions and the political system of China!

Defending his book against the left, Su reached for an amusing backhanded compliment to Mao: "During the

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20th century, Mao from the start recognized the historical realism of Deng Xiaoping." True, Mao did not kill Deng. But he did twice purge him, in 1967 and 1976, as blandly as if swatting away a mosquito.

Left-wingers continued their potshots. In one of 39,200 items posted on the Internet about the book up to September 2009, a teacher complained, "Where is the cruel story of colonialism? It seems in future students will have to go to a museum to learn the humiliations of China's modern history." Another disagreed: "Stressing the history of colonialism doesn't help cultivate pupils' talents."

One admirer of the new text said, "Here is the full shape of history." Another declared, "A textbook cannot refrain from either affirming or rejecting our actual way of life." But a critic laid down, "Cultivating patriotism is the most important goal of history education."

To change the historical emphasis, as the Shanghai educators attempted, from tyrants and wars to people and societies, from national stories to a story of civilization, was reasonable. I live in the primarily black Roxbury section of Boston, where schools stress white racism and African cultures, and Zinn's virtually anti-American book is popular. Some of us try to explain the connection between such syllabi and the difficulty young African Americans have getting jobs. I applaud the Su-Zhou textbook for downplaying great moments in the Chinese farmers' rebellion and Chinese resistance to imperialists in favor of understanding historical forces that flavor the present.

Yet amnesia about Mao's destructive leftism would be disturbing. The textbook's accounts of his utopian Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s and the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s were perfunctory. A decade from now, the six-year-old grown to be 16 should be taught more about Mao than that he "made errors" and that his "wildly ambitious" wife and defense minister led him by the nose to "orchestrate ten years of chaos." How could a Communist party—still in power in 2010—produce and for decades tolerate a *Führer*?

Hu Jintao on occasion dons a Mao tunic, cast aside years ago by most top Chinese leaders in favor of Western suit and tie, as if to draw a line between China and the "troubled" West. Someone (probably Hu) this year pushed Mao's grandson, a man of few gifts and less charisma, to the rank of general in the military. Bo Xilai, the Communist party boss of Chongqing, a huge city in the southwest, seeking to crack down on crime and corruption, promoted what he called a "Red Storm" in Mao's name. This ambitious young politician, whose father, Bo Yibo, was a senior figure in Chinese politics during the 1950s and 1960s, perhaps with an eye on the power struggles in Beijing, uses Mao songs and quotations to whip up public opinion against crooked cops and judges.

At the grassroots, Mao endures in abstract art galleries and sentimental pictures in farmers' living rooms. Tourists to Mao's former guerrilla war base of Jinggangshan toss unlit cigarettes onto Mao's old wooden bed in remembrance of one who loved to smoke. Some taxi drivers still hang a Mao portrait as a talisman on their steering wheel or stick it to a window to ward off accidents and traffic cops. In a Shanghai department store window I saw Mao serving as a mannequin for green silk pajamas. But all this trivializes evil. Germany has dealt seriously with Hitler, while China pushes Mao into folklore.

Debate over Mao and whether China's current rise is a "Chinese story" or a "world historical story" involves the future as well as the past. If the 21st century is China's under continuing Communist party rule (not very likely), Mao may endure in Chinese textbooks as a successful warrior and unifier, his failed social engineering glossed over. A six-year-old might say to his mother, "We heard about Mao in school today. Was he China's George Washington?"

Should China continue to flourish but renounce Marxism (quite likely), Mao might be blamed for the entire Communist experiment on Chinese soil. China, with its rich tradition of political ideas, would declare it did not need to import Marx and Lenin in the first place. Europe's Enlightenment philosophy and America's technology were superior imports missed by Mao. World Expo-type events would draw the millions, not Mao's mausoleum in Beijing. "Mao was a narrow man," a boy might chirp in class.

If China encounters severe adversity—not to be ruled out—Mao could be summoned, along with other Chinese authoritarians, to justify even tighter rule than today in the name of unity and cultural nationalism. The 21st century would be not Professor Zhou's international "battle of the talents" but a battle of frustrated China against a still-dominant West.

History moves on, and society changes. In 19th-century Britain, the utopian socialist and designer William Morris wrote in the novel *A Dream of John Ball*, "Men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." Morris saw the limits of politics as well as its promise. Mao achieved one of his goals for China: national strength. But the economic policies fueling China's current rise canceled his top-down utopianism. In fact, China turned to American-driven values of free markets, free trade, and scientific inquiry for its present phase of catching up and trying to become number one. The American left is equivocal about these values, but Chinese education reformers love them. ♦

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It's the Ideology, Stupid

What do Robespierre, Stalin, Hitler, Che Guevara, and Mullah Omar have in common?

By Waller R. Newell

Wherever the global jihad strikes, it does so with the same goal: the establishment of a worldwide Islamist state. This is as true when the Taliban conducts suicide operations in Pakistan as it is when Turkey's Islamist government sends a "freedom flotilla" seeking martyrdom in support of Hamas. It is true of terrorists plotting attacks on America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, whether at Fort Hood, in London, Madrid, Mumbai, Detroit, Nairobi, or Times Square. And it makes no difference whether the terrorists are home-grown, come from far away, or—in a recent twist—are Americans trained at al Qaeda camps in Yemen. Whatever rhetorical pretext may be advanced by the jihadist network—national dignity, expulsion of invaders, an end to social injustice—all of its components, whether state or nonstate actors, are united in a revolutionary purpose, justified by their millenarian ideology: the overthrow of the West and its Enlightenment values through violent struggle to usher in an age of happiness for all mankind. The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran—increasingly the country most bent on leading this international network—proclaims the global *umma* to be the ultimate purpose of the Islamic Revolution.

Yet almost no one ever says this. The Obama administration, finally driven to concede that "acts of terror" are taking place, still avoids identifying the revolutionary ideology that is the central problem. Government officials do not speak of an open-ended struggle between liberal democracy and a totalitarian movement bent on instituting a collectivist utopia. Nor do they draw the connection between this struggle for the soul of modernity and our earlier, decades-long resistance to communism and fascism. Washington, indeed, has been overwhelmingly vague in its account of jihadism, never emphasizing to the public, for instance, that Major Nidal Hasan and "underwear bomber" Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab are driven by the same ideology that motivates murderers in Baghdad and Kabul. And many opinion makers join in the obfuscation. Within minutes of learning of the shootings at Fort Hood, CNN labelled it a "rampage killing," as if the incident bore some resemblance to what happened at Columbine High School. The president referred to Abdulmutallab as an "isolated extremist." National Security Council chief of staff Denis McDonough used the same term to describe would-be Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad, who was trained in the Taliban stronghold of North Waziristan. Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano even called terrorist attacks "man-caused disasters," implicitly likening the decision to blow up innocents to a freak of nature as senseless as Hurricane Katrina.

The many cells of the global jihad are linked by a revolutionary ideology, which is why we need a more robust lexicon to describe the threat. The Bush era's 'war on terror' has become a worn-out place holder for something we are unwilling to name.

The many cells of the global jihad are linked by a revolutionary ideology, which is why we need a more robust lexicon to describe the threat. The Bush era's "war on terror" has become a worn-out place holder for something we are unwilling to name. Besides, the emphasis on "terror" subtly recasts a political act as a psychological aberration of the "terrorist," an inexplicable lashing out that could turn up anywhere, like bad weather, interrupting the flow of nor-

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mal human behavior. In this view, politically motivated violence is reduced to some psychotic episode ("he snapped") or some lurch of despair bred by poverty and hopelessness.

Economic despair, to be sure, has helped make non-Western countries recruiting grounds for Islamist movements, just as they were for previous revolutionary movements like Third World socialism. And jihadists are quick to weave the language of Marxist class struggle, national liberation, environmentalism, and anticapitalism into their explicitly religious call to arms. But despair does not suffice to explain the motives of jihadist leaders, the designers and strategists of terrorist attacks. It ignores the fact that people are quite capable of a principled, methodical hatred of liberal democracy and the political values of the Enlightenment, especially when these are seen as tainting one's own country via foreign military or cultural invasion. Reducing the causes of terrorism to poverty ignores the fact that a hatred born of wounded honor and moral outrage is independently rooted in human character and is therefore an independent variable in the equation of political extremism. This has been understood at least since Plato considered the "spirited" part of the soul.

Depending on the movement and the era, the impediment to universal bliss may be the bourgeoisie, capital, the kulaks, the Jews, America, Israel, the infidel.

The designers and practitioners of revolutionary violence, moreover, are not usually poor, disadvantaged, uneducated, or lacking in avenues for advancement. Osama bin Laden is from a wealthy family, and world-class political mass-murderers before him include the middle-class Lenin, son of a high-ranking civil servant, and the Sorbonne-educated Pol Pot. Even if we grant, for the sake of argument, that such figures—who cannot be placated with economic well-being because they are motivated by a principled hatred of the West—make up only 1 percent of all political killers, we still must understand them if we are to make sense of the violence they orchestrate—and forestall it.

Ideological motivation alone is not enough to distinguish the terrorist. Many assassins have a twisted view of the justice of their cause. The killer of Martin Luther King Jr. thought his victim was a dangerous Communist. The Washington Beltway sniper had formed Black Muslim loyalties in prison. Even John Lennon's assassin believed he was removing an evil force from the world. Common sense tells us that these lone assassins are not terrorists in the same way as al Qaeda or as past leaders and comrades in other cohesive extremist political movements.

Instead, terrorists are revolutionaries committed to killing, even to the extent of genocide, to bring about a better world. To join this particular tribe, members must carry out acts of large-scale political murder for the sake of the ideal they share: a future society that will end all alienation, vice, and unhappiness forever by submerging the individual in the bliss of the righteous collective. This future utopia can only be brought about if the one group or force standing in the way is annihilated, for that group or force is construed as the cause of all human unhappiness, injustice, and oppression. This is a trait common to revolutionary movements from the Jacobins all the way down to the jihadists of today.

Depending on the movement and the era, the impediment to universal bliss may be the bourgeoisie, capital, the kulaks, the Jews, America, Israel, the infidel. Destroying this evil force, sometimes embodied in a nation-state, sometimes in a class or race, revolutionaries believe, will liberate mankind forever. The very violence of the deed will itself be cathartic for the "warriors," transmuting their souls as heroic avatars of the cleansed world to come—the Communist new order, the Third Reich, the Year Zero proclaimed by the Khmer Rouge, the worldwide caliphate that will supposedly restore original Islamic purity. Whether working in the United States or abroad, today's jihadist revolutionaries are bent on the eventual overthrow of the American government and all other liberal democracies and their replacement with a global Islamist dictatorship as little resembling true Islam as true democracy. While sometimes imitating the language of freedom and equality, revolutionary movements as far back as the Jacobins have originated in the conviction that representative government and the Enlightenment are disastrous for human dignity and can only degrade all that is virtuous and dutiful.

Only these idealists of death, the practitioners of utopian genocide, provide a category for comprehending al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, thus enabling us to distinguish political mass murder from school massacres, hate crimes, assassinations, and idiosyncratic apocalyptic rampages like Charles Manson's "bringing down helter-skelter." The revolutionaries' motivation is not "terrorism," an increasingly empty abstraction. Rather, terrorism is a means, and it is but one means toward the end of the collectivist utopia, alongside relentless propaganda, bribery, intimidation of opponents, paralegal military action, conventional warfare, charitable good works among potential converts, tactical compromises with ordinary political processes, and the ceaseless psychological conditioning of young people in the need to fight against the oppressive force supposedly blocking the people's road to happiness, all of these integrated and directed by the blueprint for the coming

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new society. From Robespierre to Stalin, Hitler, Che Guevara, and Mullah Omar, they should be described for what they are—revolutionaries, whose violence today serves their belief in the world of tomorrow where they will rule.

Today's terrorists are aspiring tyrants. They kill in order to bring about a grim collective whose power over us all will be absolute, thereby making us "happy" by purging us of the corruption of individualism, economic well-being, free choice, female equality, and rights. And wherever such idealists of death have come to power, they have built regimes that continue to terrorize their populations in order to build the "new man." Looking through the charters and pronouncements of groups like the PLO, the Taliban, and Hezbollah, one discovers, never far beneath the pseudo-religious surface, the language of socialism (both national and international), the levelling of classes, and the eradication of individual liberty under a monolithic dictatorship. However they may understand themselves, the jihadists, like their fascist and Bolshevik predecessors, cannot be considered true men of faith, because all three of the Abrahamic faiths deny that man can save the world through secular political action, much less through mass violence. For truly pious people, only God can redeem the world. Genuine Muslim religious authorities have consistently denounced the jihadists as irreligious. One such body in Jordan, the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, has written that "Islam does not countenance utopian ideology," and adds, "When one can justify any act in the name of a worldly utopia, then one has passed into pure utilitarianism."

In sum, "terrorism" has come to mean something hardly more precise than "violence"—at best "political violence targeting civilians"—and everyone is against that. Even revolutionaries claim to be ultimately against violence, since their actions will heal the distorted soul of modern, materialistic, selfish, bourgeois, Enlightenment man, the perpetrator, they maintain, of all genuine violence, injustice, and oppression in the world, which their own use of force is meant only to combat. Revolutionaries above all have a positive goal. While adroitly downplaying their long-term aim of reconstructing humanity, they pretend to be mere nationalists, proponents of elections, defenders of just land claims, pious believers, or freedom fighters. Yet they will never categorically abjure the revolutionary faith, because they really do believe it. They are murderous and sincere. Terrorists—the leaders, the true believers—are revolutionaries bent on becoming tyrants, just as tyrants working to remake man are terrorists in power.

What the West can do to resist this global revolutionary movement is, above all, get over the idea that terrorists are lone wolves roaming the world. As revolutionaries bent on becoming tyrants, the perpetrators of mass violence both seek and need state support. That was true of Saddam Hussein's support for Hamas suicide bombers, the suspected involvement of Pakistan's intelligence services in the Mumbai bombing, and, most recently, Turkey's backing of the attempt to run Israel's blockade of the Hamas dictatorship in the Gaza Strip. The deputy minister of religion for Hamas, a terrorist movement now conjoined with a despotic state, recently referred to Jews as "foreign bacteria—a microbe unparalleled in the world" requiring annihilation. Above all, of course, is Iran, leader of the terrorist international, which supports both "Sunni" Hamas and "Shia" Hezbollah in a pincer movement aimed at Israel, and is building a collection of dictatorships (Venezuela, North Korea, Syria) in its proclaimed mission to wipe Israel from the map. While ordinary power politics, economic self-interest, and imperial ambitions play a role in these complex machinations, the overriding aim of terrorists and their terror state sponsors is the worldwide Islamist revolution to be sparked by Israel's destruction. The Obama administration shows no grasp of this important truth.

Some who did grasp it were the founders of neoconservatism, people like Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Irving Kristol, and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Their central insight was what Moynihan termed the importance of the regime. Instead of invoking the empty and hypocritical concept of "the international community"—a concept in which any agreement between democracies and tyrannies must be morally bankrupt because it places them on the same level of legitimacy—we should return to the language of "the free world" at the United Nations and in international affairs generally. Moynihan spoke of "the party of liberty." It is a question neither of Obama-style internationalism nor of Ron Paul-ist isolationism but of America championing the world's liberal democracies and the regimes that are seriously striving to join their ranks.

We need to recover our sense that, while any regime is capable of lapses in the protection of human rights, for democracies like the United States and Israel, these are lapses from their own standards, lapses which they work to redress. For tyrannies like Iran and Syria, as for jihadist revolutionaries, by contrast, human rights abuses are not lapses from a higher standard. On the contrary: The behavior we term "abuse" is their standard, one they strive to implement every day. We must also overcome our discomfiture at being labeled enemies of "the Muslim world" or the Iranian or Syrian "people." Tyrants and dictators, and the jihadists who aspire to join them, do not represent their peoples, and they cannot represent high religious values. The West's unambiguous moral opposition to such regimes and the terrorism they sponsor, whether deployed against their own populations or against innocents abroad, is at the service of liberating their peoples from fear and oppression. ♦

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Robert Moses over Roosevelt Island, 1959

ARNOLD NEWMAN / GETTY IMAGES

Man With a Plan

What Moses did for New York

BY HELEN RITTELMEYER

A picture has emerged in the popular imagination of Robert Moses: the ruthless steamroller of adorable neighborhoods, the apostle of high modernism whose arrogance blinded him to the commonsense concerns of little people like Jane Jacobs.

In reality, Moses was a pragmatist with a combative streak who mastered the thousand working parts of New York city government, a competence that made him seem like a tyrant only because so few have ever managed it. If he had been Irish and rotund, maybe history would have called him a "boss" and found him charming. He didn't have much time for the Village Neighborhood Committee to Preserve the Clock on Jefferson Market Courthouse, but he was just as impatient with utopian master planners. Neither type was practical enough for him.

Manhattan Projects
The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York
by Samuel Zipp
Oxford, 488 pp., $34.95

Still, in every book that gets written about urban planning in postwar New York, Moses and Le Corbusier get fitted for the same black hat: men with grand visions who were more than willing to trample any petition-circulating housewife who got in the way. Samuel Zipp's new study is very much in this genre, and very much suffers from the genre's primary failing; namely, that he never quite puts his finger on what, precisely, was the problem with Moses. In the end, Zipp comes across like the man who gives self-contradictory excuses for returning your tea kettle to you broken: "It's not chipped at all, and besides, it was like that when you lent it to me."

First things first. As far as the basic goals of slum clearance and housing construction were concerned, the picketers and planners were basically on the same page. Most tenants' committees, such as the United Tenants League and its various local branches, objected not to the fact of tenant relocation but to the manner; they wanted slum clearance slowed, not halted. Many lower-class leaders thought that the problem with government-sponsored housing was that there wasn't enough of it. Vito Marcantonio, the socialist congressman from Spanish Harlem, railed against

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those who were building "housing with an eyedropper"—presumably he understood that construction always displaces somebody. Robert Moses believed that urban rebuilding should be "orderly, gradual, and conservative instead of devastating," but his caution didn't win him any favors because it never seems gradual when it's your house. But who is the narrow-minded one in that story, Moses or the man who can't see past his own front stoop?

Lack of community involvement often comes up as a specific objection to the Slum Clearance Committee's methods, but it is never made clear what sort of community involvement would have sufficed. Zipp quotes the sociologist Patricia Cayo-Sexton, who wrote in 1965 that real urban renewal in East Harlem would mean "a community where the people who have to live in a building have had some say about the building's plan, and a chance to put their own personal mark on it." Never mind that New York is full of highly desirable neighborhoods whose occupants had no part in their design. What sort of "say" did Cayo-Sexton have in mind? What sort of "personal mark"? She does not say, and I cannot imagine.

As for the objection that Moses was altogether too "top-down," that's not quite right, either. There certainly were starry-eyed planners who ran around being indifferent to delicate neighborhood microcosms in the heyday of urban renewal, but Moses wasn't one of them. He worked with Le Corbusier, the superlative of that type, on the construction of the United Nations headquarters in midtown Manhattan, and he didn't much care for him. Corbu wanted to steamroll swaths of Manhattan in order to build something more Radiant-with-a-capital-R.

"I referred to opposition and cost," Moses wrote in his autobiography. In response, Corbu "shouted, 'Bah, money,' and in high dudgeon quit the meeting." In his theoretical writings Moses wrote with contempt of planners who "condemn these uncooperative families to hell and imply that they could be transplanted painlessly to New Delhi, Canberra, Brasilia, and Utopia. We do not smoke such opium. . . . If a family likes present city life, should it be forced to live according to avant-garde architectural formulas?"

The misguided policy of decentralization, which effectively banned manufacturing from Manhattan by means of zoning, was the doing of Moses's successors on the Housing and Redevelopment Board, not Moses himself. He was explicitly opposed to any "abandonment of the older cities, the creation of satellite towns, decentralization by whatever name." And to the extent that enthusiasm for highbrow, nonobjective art was a characteristic fault of modernist planners, with their wretched stabiles and mobiles, Moses can't be tarred with that brush, either. His opinion of "Orpheus and Eurydice," the Philharmonic's abstract adornment at Lincoln Center, was skeptical: "Which is Orpheus and which Eurydice? On the other hand, I sure recognize the hell of it."

Zipp is on firmer ground when he argues that public housing, as built, was impersonal, boxlike, and sterile, but even these objections have been overstated since a great deal of it can be chalked up to bohemian distaste for predictability. Leslie Fiedler wept over "the visible manifestation of the Stalinized petty-bourgeois mind: rigid, conventional, hopelessly self-righteous." Zipp cites Fiedler; those of us who find nothing inherently offensive about middle-class tastes should ignore him. And keep in mind that the left's expectations for public housing were always much too optimistic. They expected these rebuilt neighborhoods to yield "a city without slums, where the only difference between the houses of the very rich and the very poor would be the number and size and furnishing of the rooms they live in," in the words of the New York City Planning Commission's official report of 1940. Say what you like about Robert Moses, but at least he never bought into anything so transparently unrealistic.

The Triborough Bridge, 1963

GEORGE MATTSON / NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Perhaps the reformers were simply frustrated that Moses had robbed them of an issue. "In the 'good old days,'" writes social worker Ellen Lurie, "we always knew exactly what to do: press for better housing." Poverty turned out to be more complicated than that. But at least the poor no longer lived in firetraps or in damp and overcrowded rookeries where tuberculosis ran constantly amok. Slum clearance cleared slums, and New York has Robert Moses to thank for that. ♦

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B&A

Go to the Sources

The religious components of Enlightenment thought.

BY DAVID KLINGHOFFER

In the longstanding, periodically eruptive political fight over whether the United States is historically a "Christian nation," the hotspot was recently the state board of education in Texas, where a group of Christian activists on the board has amended education standards to emphasize the Christian motivations of our country's Founders. This could affect the way textbooks are written not only in Texas but, given the state's size and influence, in many other states as well. The prospect of a generation of students growing up to think there's something inherently Christian about America has secularists feeling anxious.

The Hebrew Republic
Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought
by Eric Nelson
Harvard, 240 pp., $27.95

Created Equal
How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought
by Joshua A. Berman
Oxford, 264 pp., $39.95

The issue turns, in part, on whether as men of the Enlightenment, the Founders were more likely to be wary of religion's influence on government than friendly to it. In a long essay in the *New York Times Magazine* on the Texas situation, Russell Shorto summarizes, "In fact, the Founders were rooted in Christianity—they were inheritors of the entire European Christian tradition—and at the same time they were steeped in an Enlightenment rationalism that was, if not opposed to religion, determined to establish separate spheres for faith and reason."

The simple equation between the Enlightenment and an intellectual unease with biblical religion is familiar, but is it factual? Two new books, dealing not with the American founding but more broadly with the biblical roots of European liberal political thought, substantially and interestingly complicate the question. If anything, the tradition of political reflection that educated the men who signed the Declaration of Independence turns out to be less Christian than, well, Jewish.

In *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought*, Harvard government professor Eric Nelson tells a story with few actual Jewish participants. His protagonists, with names like Grotius, Selden, Harrington, and Cunaeus, instead are Christian political thinkers and legal theorists of the 16th and 17th centuries. Yet the Jewish, and specifically rabbinic, influence is startlingly direct and pronounced. "It will not do to talk about a single, unitary Enlightenment in European intellectual history," writes Nelson, "still less to assume the Enlightenment and revealed religion were invariably (or even usually) opposed." That's an understatement.

The rise of Protestantism and the concomitant belief in the ability of an individual reader to interpret the Bible for himself brought a heightened sensitivity to the importance of grappling with Scriptural texts in their original languages. For help in understanding the Bible's often cryptic Hebrew (and some Aramaic), necessarily masked and whitewashed when rendered in other languages, Christian Bible scholars turned to the Jewish community, especially that of Holland. Translations of classic works of rabbinic exegesis, from the Talmud and Midrash to the legal and philosophical works of Maimonides, duly appeared. One English Hebraist, Henry Ainsworth, typically explained in his Bible commentary (1611-1622) that such an effort could only be adequately accomplished under the guidance of "Hebrew doctors of the ancienter sort, and some later of best esteeme for learning, as *Maimony*, or Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, (who abridged the Talmuds) & others." The impact of this openness to Jewish scholarship far exceeded matters of theology and soon encouraged a revolution in political thinking.

Nelson concentrates on three areas: the rejection of monarchy in favor of an exclusive commitment to republicanism, the increased willingness to use the power of government to equalize citizens through the redistribution of wealth, and the insistence on tolerance for religious minorities.

Impatience with kings developed under the influence of discussions in the Talmud's tractate Sanhedrin, which presents monarchy as a divine command, set against the rabbinic view in the Midrashic commentary on Deuteronomy, Devarim Rabbah, that sees setting up a king as a sin, that of rejecting divine rule in favor of human. "I follow the opinion of these rabbis" in the Midrash, explained John Milton, who studied the rabbinic text either in Latin translation or possibly in the original, in a 1654 political tract. He knew Hebrew and Aramaic, making ample use of Midrash in *Paradise Lost*. Arguments against monarchy from Hebraists including Milton, James Harrington (citing learned disputes among Rabbeinu Bachya, Rabbah bar Nachmani, Gersonides, David Kimchi, and Maimonides), and Algernon Sidney would, a century later, turn up in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.

In *De Republica Hebraeorum* (1617) the Dutchman Petrus Cunaeus explained that, on political matters, the Hebrew Bible could be relied on with assurance, for the ancient Hebrew republic was "the most holy, and the most exemplary in the whole World." Cunaeus developed the view that bibli-

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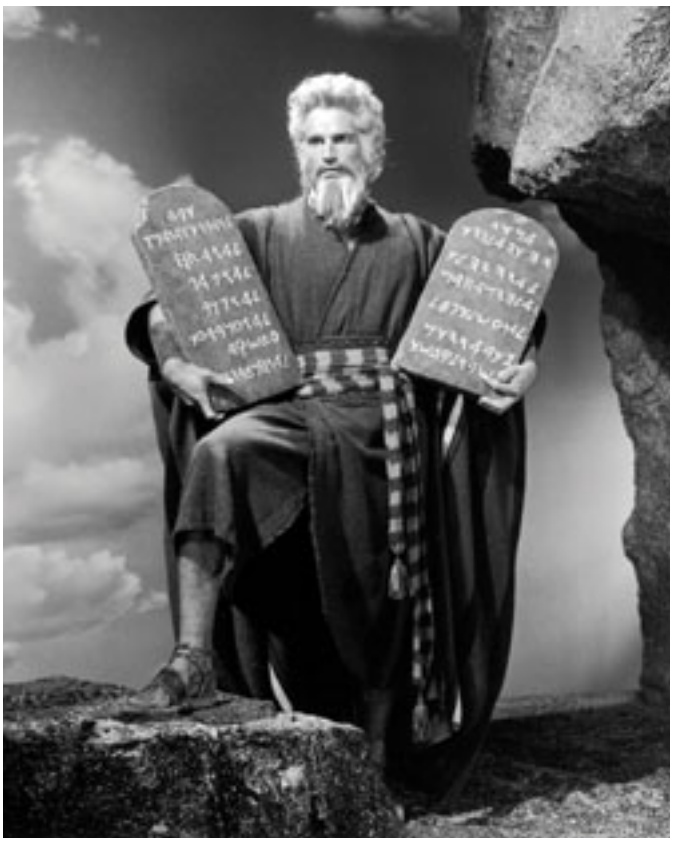
cal land laws, requiring that the holy land be divided into parcels and distributed equitably among the members of the Israelite tribes (excluding the priestly Levites), were a model for modern European countries.

Under Jewish law, inherited land, even if sold, returned to the original owner on the Jubilee, every 50 years. Large landholding wealth was therefore impossible. The idea flowed down to liberal thinkers, including Montesquieu, Rousseau, Jefferson, and Tocqueville, who saw extreme wealth as a hazard for republican government. Of course, the leveling impulse, for better or worse, remains with us.

Most provocatively, Nelson shows how the idea of "theocracy," the word itself having been adopted from the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, came in the hands of Jewish-influenced Christian thinkers to embody the case for downgrading the political power of orthodoxy-enforcing priests in favor of religious toleration. In the Jewish republic as described in Deuteronomy, priests were a caste with privileges but also severe economic disadvantages—they could not own land—and no role in governing. Instead, God was king and lawmaker. Among the features of divine-backed rabbinic legislation is the Talmud's designation of non-Jews as Noachides, children of Noah, with their own table of minimal laws (seven in all) to be observed as citizens of the Hebrew republic. The Dutch lawyer and philosopher Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) delved into Maimonides' description of the Noachide code. In "the standing Practice of the Jews," Grotius found a rationale for leaving religious dissenters alone. Just as Jewish law allowed pagans to live in the holy land undisturbed, so long as they observed a modest list of moral requirements, so too a Christian country may penalize neither unorthodox Christians nor non-Christians merely because "they are doubtful, or erroneous as to some Points either not delivered in Sacred Writ, or not so clearly but to be capable of various Acceptations." Grotius influenced John Selden (1584-1654), an Englishman who, in his scholarship, put even greater emphasis on the Noachide laws as "demonstrat[ing] God's embrace of broad toleration," writes Nelson. Selden was followed, in turn, by John Locke who, in the *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), likewise emphasized the ancient Hebrew model.



Charlton Heston in 'The Ten Commandments' (1956)

GENE LESTER / GETTY IMAGES

There were, of course, other Enlightenment voices critical of biblical faith—Spinoza, the French philosophes—but it was the theorists of the Hebrew republic who had the greater impact on Western liberal political thought. You could object that, even so, these thinkers made use of the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic texts as source or quote books while misrepresenting their spirit. Sure, in the founding generation, as before and after, many Christians drew comparisons between themselves and the Israelites of old. Samuel Langdon, pastor and representative to New Hampshire's state constitutional convention, declared in a 1788 sermon favoring ratification of the Constitution, "If I am not mistaken, instead of the twelve tribes of Israel we may substitute the thirteen States of the American union." But doesn't the Hebrew Bible call for burning witches, stoning homosexuals, and wiping out an entire city of Jews should they succumb to the lust for idolatry? How "liberal," and how American, is that?

A second and invaluable book, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* by Israeli scholar Joshua A. Berman, reminds us to consider the political teachings of the Bible as an organic whole, a text presenting a certain worldview, rather than pick out individual verses to condemn or praise. Berman, who teaches at Bar-Ilan University, shows the dramatic way the Bible overturned oppressive political ideas dominant in the ancient Near East in favor of a turn to egalitarianism. He places the Hebrew Bible in its proper historical context, contrasting it with other, contemporary cultures that were rigidly hierarchical, composed of tribute-receivers and tribute-givers, a few powerful men and a great horde of the powerless and insignificant. Even Athenian democracy assumed such a hierarchy, with each human being confined by fate to his rank or station, rising above which would be unthinkable.

The Bible, on the other hand, presents its law as a treaty of sorts—

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between God and the whole people Israel—precisely modeled on international treaties between kings in use at the time. Alternatively, Scripture pictures the relationship between the Jews and their God as a marriage: "So I spread My robe over you and covered your nakedness, and I entered into a covenant with you by oath—declares the Lord God; thus you became Mine" (Ezekiel 16:8). In either case, the key relationship is not God's with the Jewish king or royal family, but with all the people.

In the 20th century, Friedrich Hayek traced the idea of equality before the law to ancient Greek sources, but Berman more convincingly starts its genealogy with the book of Deuteronomy. In the biblical commonwealth, there are no powerful castes, no classes, no aristocracy. As Berman notes, the Bible lacks even a word for such things. The people themselves nominate their judges (Deuteronomy 16:18). Any native-born male may be king (17:15). God chooses the king (17:15) through the medium of the prophets, but the prophets themselves are assessed and approved by the people (18:20-22). Whether having a king in itself is a concession to human perversity or a positive good would later be debated by the rabbis.

Unlike other Near Eastern societies at the time, the king has no divine right to impose tributes. There are tithes expected to be paid but not to the government, and they are, in any event, voluntary with no punishment indicated for nonpayment. (This casts, by the way, Eric Nelson's point about wealth redistribution in a different light.) In Berman's treatment, the political philosophy of Deuteronomy starts to sound not just classically liberal but, in more modern terms, almost conservative. Thus, public welfare is cared for through what he smartly sees as a kind of—again, voluntary—communal insurance plan. You pay your charitable tithes and if you, then, fall on hard times yourself, you are entitled to collect your claim on public support—which, as an insurance claim, is not a gift but not really a loan, either, as we today would understand it. Therefore it is not subject to interest (23:20).

In the Hebrew republic of Deuteronomy, there is no infantilizing of any part of the citizenry. Some degree of literacy, for example, is assumed among the people, rather than education being sequestered among scribes and priests as in then-contemporary neighboring societies. Israel as a whole should stand out as a "wise and discerning nation" (4:6) or, as Exodus puts it, a "kingdom of priests" (19:6). This comes out most clearly in the weighty moral expectations—moral egalitarianism—placed on every individual without exception. Writes Berman:

> The Pentateuch has a fundamentally optimistic view of human nature—it expects that an entire nation can behave in exemplary fashion with regard to one another and with regard to their sovereign king, God. Earthly kingship is greatly attenuated, and the various seats of power in Deuteronomy are all subject to the aegis and supervision of the people as a whole—"you."

Moses Maimonides

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

It is easy to see why other cultures of the time imagined their gods as sanctioning rigid class structures and top-down hierarchies. The king represented the people to the gods and the gods to the people. He might be a god himself. That the noble class should then portray the divine world as approving the domination of the powerless masses makes sense. But as Berman observes, when the question of *cui bono?* is put to the Bible, the answer is not at all obvious. The Pentateuch's revolutionary politics benefited no one in any power structure.

So where did the Pentateuch come from? It claims to be a revelation, of course. The theologian William Paley famously argued, in 1802, that if on some lonely heath you unexpectedly stumble upon a pocketwatch lying on the ground, you may logically infer that the watch is no product of nature, despite being discovered in a natural setting, but rather that of a creative artificer. Coming across the Bible in its Near Eastern historical setting poses a similar enigma: The book bears a profound dissimilarity to the very humanly understandable religious and legal systems that preceded and followed it. Religious believers take this as a hint that its origins are not human.

Whatever view you take on that vexed question, Nelson and Berman together perform the revelatory task of demonstrating that, once having originated, the Hebrew Bible went on to inspire a way of thinking about politics also radically different from anything that came before. ♦

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B&A

A Sensual Journey

The enfant terrible channels the scoundrel par excellence. **BY SUSANNE KLINGENSTEIN**

In 1996 the Austrian writer Peter Handke, who had been living near Paris for several years, raised eyebrows with his travelogue *A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia* because he appeared to diminish Serbian war crimes. In 2005 Handke visited Slobodan Milosevic in prison in The Hague, and at Milosevic's funeral in 2006, delivered an oration in Serbian. This is the only political position he has ever taken in public.

Don Juan
His Own Version
by Peter Handke
Translated by Krishna Winston
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 112 pp., $22

Handke was born in 1942 in the southern Austrian province of Carinthia. His mother was a 22-year-old Slovene, his father a married German soldier stationed in a Carinthian village. Handke grew up poor but managed to get an exquisite education at a Catholic boarding school that was a conduit to the priesthood; later he switched to a secular high school in Klagenfurt. He was an excellent student. He went on to study law in Graz but quit in 1965, just shy of a degree, when his first novel appeared with a prestigious German publisher. A year later Handke gained both admiration and notoriety when, at a meeting of the fabled Gruppe 47 in Princeton, he insulted the assembled German postwar literary elite as unliterary blockheads suffering from "descriptive impotence."

Handke's massive oeuvre consists of some 90 publications by now (novels, plays, essays, poems, travelogues, diaries) of which about a third are available in English. His work became more complex and refined over time, but did not change radically in its central concern: It is quintessentially Flaubert's—finding *le mot juste*—but with an Austrian twist, derived from the *Sprachbezweifler* (language skeptics) Hugo Hofmannsthal, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Kraus, and Robert Musil. Handke's goal is to circumnavigate the inadequacies of language and capture in his prose the more complex sensual experiences of the world: the sensing of space and time, of visual beauty and intellectual surprise. His language appears to be concrete, if slightly stilted and precious, but the concreteness is an illusion. The language is packed with metaphors that function as trap doors from immanence into transcendence. For Handke, living means to be in transition, to cross boundaries of space and time.

This 2004 "novel," now published in a serviceable if uninspired English translation by Krishna Winston, is a perfect case in point. Here is how it opens:

> Don Juan had always been looking for someone to listen to him. Then one fine day he found me. He told me his story, but in the third person rather than in the first. At least that is how I recall it.

The narrator lives in a former gatekeeper's lodge "near the ruins of Port-Royal-des-Champs, which in the seventeenth century was France's most famous cloister."

Even if you know nothing about the place, your literary receptors should be sensing pleasure ahead. Here is a man poised on a threshold. He inhabits the gatekeeper's house at a religious place that is itself a royal gate to heaven, perhaps, or only into nature. He is recalling a visit from a 17th-century literary character who talks about himself in the third person. The narrator's imagination becomes physical reality in the narrated story, just as the reverse is true in the phrase translated by Winston as "how I recall it"—which, in the German, reads: *wie es mir in den Sinn kommt* ("as it/he walks into my senses").

The metaphor indicates that a phenomenon from the sensual world walks into a brain to become a concept. What Handke conveys here is the permeability of the border between the physical and mental world. Language itself is the shunt, or gatekeeper.

Now we understand why we are in the vicinity of Port-Royal-des-Champs, an elitist nunnery dedicated to Jansenist ideas and the centrality of grace. Grace is a sudden manifestation of transcendence in immanence. The nuns argued that only God's grace can redeem, and it cannot be earned, neither through faith nor good deeds: Either you receive it or you don't. So it's perfect for Don Juan, the moral transgressor par excellence. But Handke's Don Juan crosses more than moral boundaries; he moves through time and space, and after he installs himself in the narrator's *hortus conclusus*, whether his brain or the actual garden surrounding his house, he begins to narrate his transgressions of the past week: six women in six countries. Don Juan's ingress into the narrator's domain is sudden and violent, as the advent of grace can be. Again, the German phrasing shows Don Juan's double nature: *er fällt ein*. He takes the garden by storm (falls in) but is also the narrator's idea or conceit (*Einfall*).

Handke's fanciful play with the metaphorical nature of language, and his enjoyment of hidden literary allusions (he shares biographical features with both Blaise Pascal and Jean Racine, both of whom had female relatives living at Port-Royal) keep the reader alert and pinned to the pages just as the plot becomes so boring that even Don Juan loses interest in it. ♦

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B&A

The Diplo-Terrorist

Tall tales from a Taliban apologist.

BY ANN MARLOWE

Just as the very bad idea of entering into negotiations with the Taliban was being floated with new seriousness, Columbia University Press published this volume purporting to be the memoir of Abdul Salam Zaeef, a minor jihadist commander turned high Taliban bureaucrat turned Guantánamo detainee turned facilitator for backdoor talks.

My Life With the Taliban
by Abdul Salam Zaeef
Columbia, 360 pp., $29.95

Zaeef's name may ring a bell from his post-9/11 news conferences, or his interview with Larry King on September 17, 2001: Speaking in halting, mumbled English, the black-turbaned, bespectacled Talib (at that point the Taliban's ambassador to Pakistan) seemed detached from the reality of his situation. It does not appear to have been an act. Here, Zaeef says he was surprised to have been arrested in Pakistan in January 2002. He harps constantly on the respect due to him as a diplomat, yet he boasts of kidnapping a Pakistani policeman off the street because Afghans accused him of extortion, recruiting "people within the government of Pakistan who would provide information about its plans," and creating a "network of informants." Anywhere else but Pakistan, these activities would surely have led to the revocation of a diplomat's credentials, even without the fall of the government he represented.

Accordingly, Zaeef seethes with anger at the Pakistanis (who he said sold him to the Americans) and at us. He charges that his human rights were violated every step on his road to Guantánamo, and there as well. He recounts numerous stories of beatings by American soldiers while in custody. And yet, judging by the evidence in his memoir, it is less surprising that he was sent to Guantánamo than that he was released. Zaeef is not merely an unrepentant apologist for the Taliban regime, but is animated by a burning hatred of the United States.

(His coeditors, Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, are sympathetic to his complaints. Kuehn emailed me some months ago that "there is an extensive body of evidence testifying as to the veracity of his statements. We referred to this, and also had the Guantánamo chapters reviewed by independent international observers who had access to Guantánamo during the time Zaeef was being held there.")

The obvious reason to read *My Life* is to learn more about the enemy's mind—whether you want to negotiate with him or defeat him. But there is little here that cannot be gleaned following the action in Afghanistan's parliament—the lower house is commonly estimated at 40 percent fundamentalist—featuring various measures aimed at punishing "blasphemy" and the like while bills aimed at much-needed economic reforms languish. Part of the argument behind negotiating with the Taliban is that they represent a segment of Afghan public opinion, even if only 10 percent or so. But most Americans are not aware that there already are significant numbers of former Taliban officials in high places in Afghanistan: For example, one of the five men recently removed from the U.N. blacklist is Abdul Hakim Munib, who has been governor of Uruzgan since 2007. Acquaintances working for NATO forces in that area give him decidedly mixed reviews. It's never clear if such "allies" are actually on our side or not.

My Life doesn't offer any sensationalistic thrills, just the dull self-justifications of a not-very-bright, provincially educated bigot. Zaeef characterizes Afghans and Pakistanis first and foremost by ethnicity (hint: Pashtun is good). Though he served as a foreign representative of his country, he, like the rest of the Taliban, clearly thought of himself as representing only Afghanistan's Pashtuns. One of the more bizarre angles to this book, pushed heavily by Linschoten and Kuehn, is a revisionist history in which the Taliban fought in the anti-Soviet jihad.

> Most important for the purposes of this book is the knowledge of the presence of the Taliban—they were identified as such at the time—among the ranks of mujahideen in the 1980s in southern Afghanistan. Readers may be confused to learn of a pre-history to the movement that supposedly started (or was created by Pakistan) in 1994, but even a cursory knowledge of the history confirms it. . . . The Taliban, the only legitimate authorities on the *sharia*, were of course best known for the formal justice system and mediation services that they provided to all groups in the south. . . . Everyone still alive and with an opinion agrees . . . that the Taliban played a significant role in the greater Kandahar area, with a particularly important set of front lines and groups established in the fertile triangle in between the two branches of the River Arghandab in Panjwayi district.

Well, I'd never heard or read anything similar, so I checked with some acquaintances with long service in the area. An American diplomat intimately involved with the jihad commented:

> I've seen nothing to suggest that the southerners who formed the core of the Taliban had any political significance during the jihad period. . . . Many of them were associated with Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's Harakat-e-Inqilabi Islami. . . . Within Nabi Mohammadi's party,

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> which had a reputation for not being tightly organized or disciplined, there may have been a group of "commanders" who were operating in the South who may have had established relations and even played an active political role in places like Quetta.

This claim seems to be part of a strategy by Zaeef to aggrandize the Taliban by endowing them with a longer and more noble history than is generally attributed to them. That's understandable. What's more puzzling is why Westerners such as the two editors and the scholar who wrote the introduction, Barnett Rubin, an NYU professor and State Department consultant, are aiding Zaeef's plans.

Many other aspects of *My Life* raise questions about accuracy and scholarly standards, which is surprising in a book appearing under the imprimatur of Columbia and, according to the editors, "almost four years in the making." The text itself is questionable. I am skeptical that a man with a ninth-grade education—from wretched provincial Afghan and Pakistani schools—organized his thoughts by chapter, even to the extent suggested. I am further skeptical of the English translation, including such unlikely phrases as "the fractionalisation" of Afghan society, "petrol-driven economies," or "the industry-standard 46 percent nitrogen content."

What rings true is Zaeef's constant trope of identifying everyone he meets in Pakistan by ethnicity and looks: e.g., "his face was black and intimidating, his lips swollen, and his nose and his belly were large." Barnett Rubin refers to Zaeef as "eloquent," but "childish" is the word I would have used for these irrelevant physical descriptions. No attention is paid to dates or chronology. It's true that Afghans, particularly those who, like Zaeef, have only a grade school education, are far vaguer about chronology than Westerners. But by the time Zaeef was an official in the Taliban government, even if he didn't keep a journal or have the ability to reconstruct his movements, the editors could have sat down with him and news reports and put it all together. We aren't even told what month our hero began to serve as the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan ("It was 2000 and I was on my way to Jalalabad when I first learned about my nomination as ambassador").

Ambassador Abdul Salam Zaeef speaks, 2001

REUTERS / CORBIS

In response to some emailed queries about the status of the text, Kuehn wrote to me:

> We received an initial text from Zaeef, which we then had translated, conducted follow-up interviews to clarify points. For certain passages we asked him to write new text and expand on his original comments (or, where we wondered whether he had left something out, etc). This then had another set of follow-up interviews. All of this was complemented by a set of interviews with friends and people who had known him in Kandahar and other places throughout his life.

The editors refer to "lots of fact-checking," but it has mainly been lavished on tracking down obscure Kandahar village populations. Some references that cry out for a footnote—for instance, Zaeef's joke that Pakistan is "Majbooristan" ("Compulsion-i-stan" in Farsi)—will be unintelligible to most readers. Yet Arabic, Farsi, and Pashto words, even those well-known to foreign readers such as "mullah" and "Taliban," are italicized in the text. More important, there are no cautionary footnotes to dozens of dubious or outright false statements. For example, that President Bush "wore a flak jacket in the White House" in the days after 9/11, appeared on television "the second day after the attack . . . standing in front of the camera in a bulletproof vest like a soldier" and circled America constantly in Air Force One, "unable to land." Or that after Pearl Harbor, "America was swift to retaliate. Without hesitation, the United States attacked Japan by dropping two nuclear bombs."

Kuehn wrote me that "we checked events where feasible. This was coupled together with three anonymous peer reviewers who also checked the book for . . . Columbia University Press, two of which went to several pages of comments, which we then responded to and amended the book as per comments/criticisms."

If you like the Zaeef/Linschoten/Kuehn approach to facts and history, you have a treat coming. Deep in the "Suggestions for Further Reading" at the back, another Zaeef production, *Taliban: A History*, is described as "forthcoming." Perhaps Abdul Salam Zaeef and his editors are expecting—or hoping?—that by the time this work is fully digested by the reading public we will have handed Afghanistan back to the Taliban. ♦

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B&A

Maryland's Patriot

The life and times of the only Catholic signer.

BY PATRICK J. WALSH

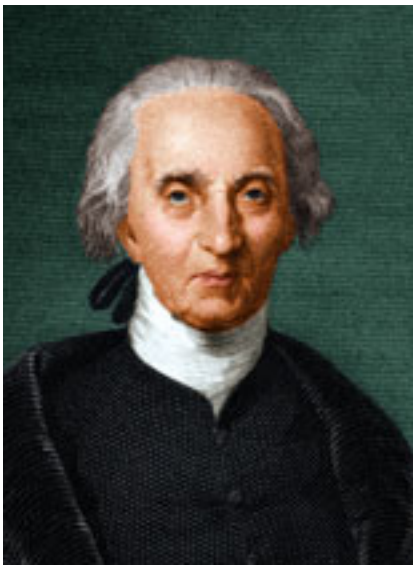
Most Americans are unaware of Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737-1832). Born to an extremely wealthy family in Annapolis, he was the only Roman Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence, and the last survivor of the 56 patriot-signers.

Carroll's grandfather Charles "The Settler" (1660-1720) was an Irish Catholic who found himself dispossessed of his land in County Offaly. Fortunately, this lawyer had friends at the Stuart court of James II and in 1688, through the patronage of Lord Baltimore, got himself named attorney general to the colony of Maryland. Unfortunately for him, in the fall of that same year, the Protestant William of Orange deposed the Catholic James II and a coup in Maryland toppled the new attorney general. But Carroll married a wealthy widow, inherited lands, and, over time, built a fortune by way of being an astute planter, lawyer, banker, and merchant.

Though rich, Carroll was always in a precarious position as a Roman Catholic amidst Maryland's ascendant Protestants. In London, William and Mary instigated new penal laws against Catholics, and Maryland's general assembly passed similar legislation barring Catholics from voting, holding public office, or performing military service, restricting Catholic education, and forcing Catholics to pay a higher tax rate. The Settler's son, Charles Carroll of Annapolis (1702-1782), found these laws so oppressive that he considered founding a Catholic colony in the Arkansas territory.

Like other members of the Irish Catholic aristocracy, Carroll of Annapolis sent his son (the future Charles of Carrollton) to France to be educated; he was likely the best formally educated among the Founders. In 1749, at age 11, he left America for St. Omers, a Jesuit college in France where he began a European educational itinerary lasting 16 years. He spoke French like a native, read and wrote Latin and Greek, received an M.A. in philosophy, and studied law in London.

American Cicero
The Life of Charles Carroll
by Bradley J. Birzer
ISI, 230 pp., $25



Had the Carroll clan forsaken their faith they might have attained tremendous political and social power in colonial Maryland. But they wouldn't submit. Proudly Irish and Catholic, they considered themselves a new hybrid—"Marylando-Hibernus"—and Carroll of Annapolis encouraged his son never to forget that "we derive our descent from princes . . . notwithstanding our sufferings under Elizabeth and Cromwell we were in affluent circumstances and respected and we intermarried with the best families in the Kingdom of Ireland."

Carroll of Carrollton rose to prominence as a political essayist in Maryland in the early 1770s, and the faction of his supporters would guide the colony during the struggle for independence. By embracing the patriot cause the Carrolls had gambled their fortune, but the revolution's success settled these disenfranchised Irish Catholic rebels in the new American republic. As Carrolton said, "When I signed the Declaration of Independence, I had in view not only our independence of England but the toleration of all sects, professing the Christian religion, and communicating to them all great rights."

American Cicero is an excellent short biography, focusing mostly on Carroll's "liberal and religious education." At one point the author notes that Carroll "rejected the philosophy of John Locke . . . for reasons lost to history," but it would have been interesting to have speculated why. As a devout, educated Catholic/classicist, Carroll no doubt believed that Locke lowered the sights of mankind by demoting both the pagan pursuit of virtue and the Christian ideal of charity for a comfortable bourgeois life of self-preservation. Cicero had lived and died for manly virtue; the ancient philosophers held that the purpose of life was to seek the highest good, which is God. Locke and his fellow social contract theorists wanted a better life on earth and thought the "highest good" too difficult for man to attain.

As a political theorist, Charles Carroll understood the responsibilities inherent in freedom: He strove to build a commonwealth at risk to his own personal wealth, defining the conservatism of his day as more than the unfettered right of individuals to pursue success. His understanding of the Declaration and the Constitution was that with rights came responsibilities to the community. Freedom is our modern ideal; but Carroll argued that freedom is more than the license to do what we want. He agreed with Aristotle, who observed that among the barbarians there is free-

STOCK MONTAGE / GETTY IMAGES

Patrick J. Walsh is a writer in Quincy, Massachusetts.

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B&A

French Connection

The unintended comedy of a Cold War drama.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Remember the parody paperback craze of the early 1980s, stimulated by *The Official Preppy Handbook* and a remarkable piece of mimicry called *Not the New York Times*? In 1983 I wrote up a proposal for a parody to be called *Not TV Guide* that was to spoof both the tropes of network television and the magazine itself, then the most popular in the world. One bit was a listing for what network announcers would then have called a "very special made-for-television event" on CBS Tuesday night at 9: *'We're Gonna Beat This Thing': The Alexander Solzhenitsyn Story*, starring Ed Asner as Solzhenitsyn and Cloris Leachman as his lovely wife Madelyn.

Farewell
Directed by Christian Carion

I thought of my fantasy TV movie while watching the new French thriller *Farewell*, which purports to tell the real story of a Soviet intelligence official who began passing vital secrets to the West in the early 1980s. *Farewell* is being released in art houses, and its highfalutin' pedigree is enhanced by the fact that its two lead characters are played by two distinguished European film directors. One is Guillaume Canet, who plays the Frenchman to whom the intelligence officer passes his information. The Serb Emir Kusturica, who made the spectacular anti-Communist film *When Father Was Away on Business* in 1985 before becoming a disgraceful cinematic toady of Slobodan Milosevic's, is the Russian double agent.

Farewell has a great and sobering true story to tell, but it tells that story in such a falsified and cartoonish way that it resembles nothing so much as a "very special" TV movie from the 1980s: simplified, vulgarized, and flattened into meaninglessness.

The real "Farewell" was, according to most accounts, a highly unstable man named Vladimir Vetrov whose purposes were impossible to discern and who ended up killing a fellow KGB officer and wounding his own mistress in a Moscow park in 1982.

None of this is in the movie, and what is there is far less dramatic and interesting. Vetrov is renamed Sergei Gregoriev, and he is portrayed as a decent and calm guy who only wants a better Russia for his son, mutely accepts how his wife is cuckolding him with his boss, and seems to be motivated by a love for French poetry.

The movie does reflect the reality of the "Farewell" material: that it revealed to Western intelligence the extent to which Soviet economic development in the 1960s and '70s was almost entirely the result of industrial espionage. Paid agents inside companies throughout the West had been delivering technical information of a highly sensitive nature to the Soviets, who were using that information to do what they could to advance their own economy and military might. The obsession in the early 1980s with the problem of "technology transfer" arose as a direct result of the Farewell dossier, and in a 1983 National Security Decision Directive, preventing technology loss became a key element of American foreign policy.

More interestingly, the network revealed by Farewell was (it is said) used against the Soviet Union. Buggy computer equipment was sent behind the Iron Curtain, and according to some accounts, its integration into a Soviet oil pipeline caused a mammoth industrial accident in 1982.

Almost none of this is in the movie, either. Instead, it becomes the story of the agent's relationship with a French engineer who becomes his conduit almost entirely by happenstance. The motivation of the French engineer is entirely puzzling: He's placing himself in danger, his wife doesn't want him to do it, and he's not getting paid for it. So why does he risk it? The movie tells us it's because he cares about the agent and the agent's family, but since there's nothing in the movie that would give him any reason to care, this seems bizarre.

The obvious choice would have been to make the engineer commit to this dangerous course out of a loathing of the Soviet system and a desire to help the West, but the film's director and cowriter Christian Caron apparently thinks such a thing would be too vulgar and warmongery. Instead, *Farewell* displays an old-fashioned French loathing for all things American that is almost as quaint as the Walkman the engineer smuggles into Moscow for his son.

The actors playing Francois Mitterrand (then France's president) and the French intelligence chief narrow their eyes with disgust at the reptilian game-playing of the Americans they encounter in the person of a CIA director named Feeney (William Dafoe) and, especially, Ronald Reagan. He is played by Fred Ward in what may be the worst performance in the history of acting, and I am including the work of Paris Hilton in that unforgettable epic *The Hottie and the Nottie*. Except that *Farewell* also includes David Soul—yes, Hutch from *Starsky and Hutch*. And Soul might be worse than Ward, which is not just saying something, it's saying everything.

What's even more amazing is that Carion clearly wanted their performances to be lousy, to reflect badly on the characters they were playing. At least Ed Asner would have tried to be a good Solzhenitsyn. He would have failed, but he would have tried. And doubtless Cloris Leachman would have been just wonderful as the long-suffering Madelyn. I think I would have preferred that movie to this one. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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"Material girl Michelle Obama is a modern-day Marie Antoinette on a glitzy Spanish vacation." —*New York* Daily News, *August 5, 2010*

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Party Relocated to Chuck E. Cheese

SEE PAGE 6

LET THEM EAT FLAN

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MICHELLE REIGNS IN SPAIN

First Lady Michelle Obama and an entourage of 40 of her closest friends and courtiers checked into their luxury hotel in the seaside resort town of Marbella, where they reserved no fewer than 70 rooms. In the lobby, pushing their way through a crowd of Spanish peasants seeking relief from a devalued euro and a ballooning deficit, the first lady was overheard saying, "Let them eat flan—preferably one that uses soy milk or skim or 2 percent." She also refused to speak with anyone whose Body Mass Index was not between 18.5 and 24.9.

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